



The key messages for each theme of the European Public Health WEEK 2019 are based on evidence and resources shared by a variety of sources, including:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe
- The European Commission (e.g. through the State of Health in the EU – Companion report 2017)
- EUPHA Sections, EUPHA members and EUPHANxt
- Experts from the Council of Occupational Therapists for European Countries (COTEC), World Federation of Physical Therapy – European Region (WCPT), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) and Euro Youth Mental Health (EYMH).

Unless stated otherwise, messages refer to all 53 Member States of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Please refer to the [media toolkit](#) for guidance on how to best use the key messages.

Thursday 16 May - Sustainable and healthy diets

Motto of the day: “A healthy diet while taking care of our planet.”

Key messages

1. A diet that includes more plant-based foods and fewer animal source foods is healthy, sustainable, and good for both people and the planet. It is not a question of all or nothing, but rather small changes for a large and positive impact.
2. Intake of sugars can be reduced by limiting the consumption of foods and drinks containing high amounts of sugars and eating fresh fruit and raw vegetables as snacks.
3. Eating has a strong social component. Sharing meals with others helps to maintain mental health and tackle social isolation.
4. It is important to make the healthy option the easier option for consumers.

5. Healthy dietary practices start early in life – breastfeeding fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development.

Other facts and figures

- Unhealthy diets together with lack of physical activity are leading global risks to health.
- The food we eat, the ways we produce it from farm to fork, and the amounts wasted or lost have major impacts on human health and environmental sustainability. Getting it right with food will help to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.
- Food insecurity has dramatic effects on the health of children and the elderly in particular, influencing educational progress, family stress, and nutritional deficiencies.
- Excessive consumption of saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, sugar and salt increase the risk of overweight and obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and several types of cancer - the main cause of illness and disability across the European Region.
- Childhood overweight and obesity are a major issue throughout the European Region, with more than 40% of children aged 7-9 years being overweight.
- Food transportation with a low carbon footprint, as well as economical and sensible exploitation of land and water in food production represent important health resources.