

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

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National strategy(ies)

In the [Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health](#) (Sa?l?k Bakanl??? Stratejik Plan?), the basic policy document in the field of health and youth health, the measure of “Healthy living for young people and involving them to support health programs” is listed among the 2020 Policy Priorities.

The first strategic goal set in the [Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health](#) (Sa?l?k Bakanl??? Stratejik Plan?) is to protect the individual and the community from health risks and foster healthy life styles. In line with this strategic goal, 10 strategic objectives have been set:

1. To develop healthy dietary habits, increase the level of physical activity, and reduce obesity

2. To sustain the fight against tobacco and to reduce the exposure to tobacco and the use of addictive substances
3. To develop health literacy to increase individuals' responsibility for their health
4. To raise awareness of reproductive health and encourage healthy behaviors
5. To reduce the negative impact on health of public health emergencies and disasters
6. To protect and promote the health and well-being of employees by improving occupational health
7. To mitigate the negative impact on health of environmental hazards
8. To carry out effective actions on social determinants of health by mainstreaming health in all policies
9. To combat and monitor communicable diseases and risk factors
10. To reduce and monitor the incidence of non-communicable diseases and risk factors

In line with the objective of ensuring the effective utilization of preventive and essential health services set forth in the [Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health \(Sa?l?k Bakanl??? Stratejik Plan?\)](#), a sub-objective (to roll out the use of health promotion and healthy life style programs) has been defined and the below-listed measures have been planned to be put into practice.

- To roll out the implementation of the Program to Combat Obesity
- To roll out the implementation of the Prevention and Control Program for Diabetes
- To roll out the implementation of the Prevention and Control Program for Tobacco
- To roll out the implementation of the Prevention and Control Program for Cardiovascular Diseases
- To roll out the implementation of the Prevention and Control Program for Chronic Respiratory Diseases

In line with another objective set forth in the [Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Health \(Sa?l?k Bakanl??? Stratejik Plan?\)](#), which is to develop healthy dietary habits, increase the level of physical activity and to reduce obesity, the below listed strategic objectives and associated measures have been defined:

Strategic Objective: To change individual dietary and physical activity behaviors through health development programs.

- To organize national campaigns to promote healthy dietary habits, increase the level of physical activity and reduce obesity
- To organize activities to be supported by societal role models to promote healthy diets and physical activity
- To organize seminars, conferences and competitions, etc. for students and enlisted soldiers and draftees to promote healthy diets and physical activity
- To establish a hotline to provide counseling on obesity and physical activity to promote healthy diets and physical activity
- To monitor behavioral change programs to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity
- To ensure that the individuals monitor the impact and outcomes of the programs to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity

Strategic Objective: To develop standards for identification, monitoring and treatment of overweight individuals.

- To develop monitoring and treatment standards for monitoring of children of risk for obesity and chronic diseases
- To develop monitoring and treatment standards for over-weight patients
- To establish a data collection system to monitor people's life styles (diet, exercise, etc.)
- To inform patients about healthy dietary habits and physical exercise
- To develop standards for hospital food according to the program to fight obesity

Strategic Objective: To facilitate healthier food choices

- To contribute to inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation to improve food safety and nutritional quality.
- To ensure inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation to reduce sugar, fat and salt content
- To ensure the establishment of a food labelling system to promote healthy food choices
- To establish health protection standards for food advertisements
- To monitor food supplement advertisements and ensure that sanctions are enforced in the event of adverse reactions

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

The Ministry of Health organized a project called “[Move Everywhere](#) (Hareket Her Yerde Projesi)” between April 6 - June 28, 2016 in order to mobilize all the society for physical activities and encourage them for a healthy life. In the context of the project conducted to explain that doing simple exercises in daily life can lead to a healthier life, various activities were held and presents were distributed to young people.

The Ministry of Health prepared cartoons with the themes of oral and dental health and hygiene of hands for children in order to support healthy life style, and they were shared with the target audience through healthy life tools. Works on Sa?l?k IP TV (Health IP TV) to cover the topics of the fight against tobacco, active life, healthy nutrition, organ donation, 112 emergency service, blood donation, and Central Physician Appointment System (MHRS) are going on at full speed.

The Directorate General of Basic Education under the Ministry of National Education has put into practice the “[Healthy Steps Project \(Sa?l?kl? Ad?mlar Projesi\)](#)” 2016-2019 with a view to increasing the awareness of 3rd grade (primary school) students, teachers and parents on correct nutrition and physical activities, and raising awareness on target groups on balanced nutrition through training activities. In the context of the project, which has been developed to support the learning outcomes of Social Studies, Games and Physical Activities lessons in 3rd grades (primary school); in addition to the course contents, certain tools and methods have been offered so that the teachers can impress the students and their parents and the students can impress their parents, to create a behavioral change and a change in attitudes as a chain through in-class implementations. The project aims to raise awareness among children on healthy nutrition at an early stage of their development, facilitate the raising of healthy generations in the future, and to protect children from various diseases thanks to healthy nutrition.

The Ministry of Health has conducted a program namely [Healthy Nutrition and Active Life Program of Turkey \(Türkiye Sa?l?kl? Beslenme ve Hareketli Hayat Program?\)](#) between the years of 2013 and 2017 with a view

to effectively fighting against obesity that has an increasing prevalence in Turkey and affecting children and adolescents; encouraging the individuals to gain the habits of adequate and balanced diet and regular physical activity by increasing the knowledge level of public on fight against obesity; and by this way decreasing the prevalence of obesity and obesity related diseases (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, some types of cancer, hypertension, musculoskeletal disorders, etc.). In addition, various other programs, projects and training activities are conducted by several institutions and organizations including certain public bodies and institutions, universities, private sector, civil society organizations, etc. Conducting these works in a coordinated manner and in line with a road map is an important factor affecting the level of success. The action plan also aimed at carrying out the planned works in our country within the context of a certain program so that these works can be measured, monitored, conducted in a coordinated manner. Accordingly, certain strategies, objectives, and measures have been set and implemented in the framework of the [Healthy Nutrition and Active Life Program of Turkey](#) (Türkiye Sağlıklı Beslenme ve Hareketli Hayat Programı) (2013-2017).

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

School Health is defined as all the works conducted to evaluate and improve the health of students and school staff, ensure and maintain a healthy school life, and provide health training to students and thus to the society. School health services cover the works conducted to evaluate the health of students and school staff together with their families, improve their health, ensure and maintain a healthy school life, and provide training to the students, schools and thus to a population that makes nearly one-fifth of the society (and when they are considered together with their families, almost half of the society either directly or indirectly).

The aim of health education is to provide correct health information to students, and let them gain positive behaviors for a healthy lifestyle. Health education is designed to create a healthy society by helping the students “change their behaviors for a life-long healthy lifestyle”. When students gain healthy habits through health education, their families are also positively affected by this. The studies conducted advocate that students are the leader of health education and the easiest way to access the families.

The basic duties of health personnel working at primary health institutions include providing “health education at schools”. Programs of the Ministry of National Education serve as a guide in defining the topics to be covered in these education activities. In addition, the Ministry of Health asks the primary health institution staff to provide education in the context of certain days and weeks. Sometimes, school managements and health institutions also organize health education programs to address the health problems and children’s needs in certain regions, depending on the characteristics of the respective region.

Significant progress has been achieved in terms of school health with the launching of the “[Healthy Nutrition and Active Life Program of Turkey](#) (Türkiye Sağlıklı Beslenme ve Hareketli Hayat Programı)” pursuant to the Prime Ministry Circular published in the Official Gazette dated September 29, 2010 and numbered 27714. The program covers the school milk program initiated in primary schools; various campaigns and activities to promote healthy nutrition implementations of school canteens and dining halls in schools (white flag project, nutrition-friendly school project, etc.), and auditing of nutrition services provided by school canteens and dining halls in schools on a regular basis to evaluate their compliance with adequate and balanced nutrition and food safety criteria.

There is a lesson called Medical Knowledge and Traffic Culture taught in secondary schools. The curriculum content of the Medical Knowledge and Traffic Culture Lesson has been developed by taking into consideration issues like healthy life, health protection, first aid knowledge, traffic rules, safe traffic, and traffic accidents. The Curriculum of Medical Knowledge and Traffic Culture Lesson, which was drafted based on the General Purposes and Basic Principles of Turkish National Education defined in the 2nd article of the Basic Law of

National Education numbered 1739, aims to enable the students to:

- have an understanding of health-related basic concepts and terms,
- realize that being healthy and leading a healthy life is a human right,
- have an understanding of the positive impacts of protective health services on the health of individuals and society,
- be willing to improve and protect their individual health, and adopt the relevant attitudes required to lead a healthy life,
- follow-up the developments about health,
- be knowledgeable about basic first aid responses to disease or injury situations that may be encountered,
- realize the attitudes and values required by the traffic culture to be adopted, and transform them into behaviors,
- have an understanding of the rules to be complied with in the traffic environment.

Peer-to-peer education approaches

It is accepted that health education and health development education should not be limited to the curricula offered in classes. The [Health Developing Schools Project](#) (Sa?l??? Geli?tiren Okullar Projesi) is an action that involves teachers, school staff and everyone dealing with school business. The concept of health developing schools has been designed on the principle of equality of opportunities in education. It aims to offer every child the opportunity to receive education in health promoting schools by means of mobilizing all the management network to monitor and improve the physical and mental health of students, teachers and all other school staff, and inserting the idea of health promotion to the agenda of every school. The project was developed to strengthen the children's ability to make correct health decisions in their future lives and improve their ability to act as individuals by helping them gain knowledge about healthy lifestyle and adopt related attitudes and behaviors in a healthy environment where they can motivate themselves by seeing what others do for being healthy, and by enabling them to become sensitive about the negative factors causing adverse effects on health. Moreover, the project also serves to strengthen the public support to health education given in schools.

Collaboration and partnerships

The Ministry of Health and Ankara University have jointly held a summit called the “[Active and Healthy Aging Summit](#) (Türkiye Aktif ve Sa?l?kl? Ya?lanma Zirvesi)”. In addition, a Survey on Active and Healthy Aging in Turkey was conducted and its results were compiled in a book.

Youth Centers operating in 81 provinces under the Ministry of Youth and Sports have been organizing seminars, conferences and informative meetings on the fight against drugs, in cooperation with the Green Crescent and Police Departments.

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

The Ministry of Youth and Sports is the principal public authority responsible for making sports widespread and organizing informal educations addressing youth health. The basic activities conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports to protect and improve youth health include organizing training activities to fight against addiction and adopt healthy lifestyles, and supporting the activities conducted by civil society organizations fighting

against addiction. In 2016, the Ministry of Youth and Sports provided support to a total of 20 foundations and associations with regard to the protection of young people against drugs and harmful habits. The Ministry has provided 1 million 726 thousand Turkish lira financial support to 16 associations and 4 foundations conducting projects about fight against drugs in 14 provinces in the last two years. A total of 54 thousand 385 people from İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Edirne, Van, Diyarbakır, Çankır, Elazır, Aksaray, Nevşehir, Bingöl, Hakkari, Malatya and Bursa benefited from the supports provided. In addition, the Ministry also provided “Awareness Training on Fight against Addiction” through the seminars it organized for 1,803 trainers serving in the Central Anatolia, Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Eastern Anatolia Regions. Students participating in the summer camps of the Ministry also received training on fight against drugs.