



Children’s Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Liverpool over the past decade

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The current mean UK intake of fruit and vegetables (F&V) for 11–18 year olds is low and estimated to be 3.4 portions per day for boys and 2.8 portions per day for girls⁽¹⁾. The aim of this study was to investigate changes in F&V consumption in serial cohorts of 9–10 yr old children from 2000–2001 to 2010–2011. Children in UK school year 5 (9–10 yrs of age) completed the SportsLinX Lifestyles Survey containing a food intake questionnaire⁽²⁾, ($n = 30,239$ [15,336 boys, 14,903 girls]). The proportion of boys and girls reportedly consuming F&V on the previous day to surveying were investigated annually from 2000–2011. Positive changes in F&V consumption were observed over time, with the most recent cohort more likely to consume F&V in comparison to the 2000–2001 baseline. Girls were more likely to consume F&V across several study years in comparison to boys (Table 1).

Table 1. Self-reported consumption of fruit, vegetables: Boys and girls 2000–2001 to 2010–2011

| Year | Fruit | | | | | Vegetables | | | | |
|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|---------|------------|------|-------|------|---------|
| | Boys | | Girls | | P value | Boys | | Girls | | P value |
| | N | % | n | % | | n | % | n | % | |
| 2000–2001 | 1137 | 71.5 | 1108 | 70.7 | 0.33 | 479 | 30.7 | 469 | 30.6 | 0.49 |
| 2001–2002 | 964 | 71.4 | 873 | 71.9 | 0.41 | 424 | 32.1 | 373 | 31.4 | 0.36 |
| 2002–2003 | 975 | 70.9 | 1021 | 75.0 | 0.01 | 477 | 35.0 | 471 | 35.2 | 0.48 |
| 2003–2004 | 1334 | 75.0 | 1409 | 77.7 | 0.03 | 676 | 38.6 | 775 | 43.6 | 0.04 |
| 2004–2005 | 1209 | 76.8 | 1257 | 80.8 | <0.01 | 591 | 37.9 | 685 | 44.3 | <0.01 |
| 2005–2006 | 879 | 84.0 | 913 | 88.0 | <0.01 | 442 | 43.0 | 509 | 48.9 | 0.004 |
| 2006–2007 | 1355 | 84.0 | 1335 | 87.0 | 0.01 | 714 | 44.6 | 710 | 46.3 | 0.185 |
| 2007–2008 | 1027 | 81.5 | 1068 | 87.5 | <0.01 | 527 | 42.1 | 566 | 46.9 | <0.01 |
| 2008–2009 | 1138 | 82.9 | 1226 | 84.6 | 0.13 | 584 | 42.9 | 661 | 45.6 | 0.08 |
| 2009–2010 | 436 | 80.9 | 477 | 86.7 | <0.01 | 231 | 43.6 | 260 | 47.3 | 0.12 |
| 2010–2011 | 662 | 76.9 | 672 | 81.5 | 0.07 | 355 | 41.5 | 359 | 44.1 | 0.22 |

These encouraging findings suggest that children’s F&V intake has improved since 2000. Furthermore, data indicate that boys and girls may require separate or different healthy eating messages to further improve food intake.

1. National Diet and Nutrition Survey (2010) Available at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/ndnsreports0809.pdf>. (Accessed 28/04/12).
2. Johnson B, Hackett A, Bibby A & Cross J (1999) An investigation of the face validity of a food intake questionnaire: lessons for dietary advice? *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* **12**, 307–316.