

Summary of results on barriers and facilitators to healthy food

The Know How to Take Care + project aims to design more equitable and inclusive services for sports and physical activity (SPA) and access to healthy eating. Research has been carried out to identify barriers and facilitators to these services. The results will be used to plan services that are better adapted to the needs of the population.

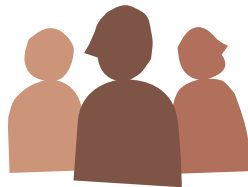
The results presented in this document are based on the testimonials of 36 people from immigrant and/or racialized families who participated in the research activities of the Know How to Take Care + project. For these people, healthy eating is a diversified diet based on natural plants and beverages, which is culturally appropriate, child-friendly, and prepared at home. The project enabled participants to identify several barriers and facilitators to their access of healthy food. They also proposed solutions to address the issues identified.

"They (the children) really like our more cultural meals, but it's hard here. They adapt, but finding the financial means to buy it is difficult."

Testimonial, women's group, Lachine and LaSalle

"And as it's been two years, two years of garlic harvesting, I eat my own garlic, no pesticides. The children have learned that, so each one has his own little corner (garden) where he lives, where they grow tomatoes, and they grow garlic. Yes, and the children also learn about nature and how to love the earth."

Participant in the men's group, Saint-Michel, Ahuntsic-Cartierville



Barriers

Financial insecurity, lack of access to employment, and discrimination are all factors that have a strong and negative impact on their access to food.

The difficulty of passing on **traditional food cultures** to children in a context where artificial, sweet, and salty foods are valued is a challenge that was emphasized.

Food banks can **lack fresh foods from a variety of cultures**, and sometimes the food available is past the expiration date, which participants do not find acceptable. Beyond that, strict eligibility criteria and the documents required to qualify for services further complicate access to food banks.

Facilitating factors

Economic strategies (planning meals and purchases, preparing home-cooked meals, integrating vegetarian recipes, using point cards, etc.), **access to food services** (food banks and Carte proximité) and continuing to **develop culinary skills** with their children are three elements that help families eat healthily.

Community and collective gardens can play an important role in stimulating children's curiosity about healthy eating.

Possible solutions

The participating families proposed several solutions to increase access to healthy foods:

- 1 **Raising awareness** about food aid services and reducing the bureaucracy and stigma surrounding these services;
- 2 **Offering** more fresh, culturally appropriate foods and ready-to-eat meals;
- 3 **Offering** workshops around cooking and gardening to encourage intergenerational and intercultural culinary exchanges.

