

# Linking children's lifestyle behaviours to their mental health



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ROI4Kids

Return on Investment  
for Kids' Health

Childhood is a crucial period for the development of mental illness and also a time where patterns of lifestyle behaviours are established.



- GRAIN PRODUCTS
- SATURATED FAT
- ADDED SUGAR
- FRUIT & VEG
- MEAT & ALT
- MILK & ALT
- SLEEP TIME
- SCREEN TIME
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Among 3,400 10/11 year olds, information on meeting lifestyle recommendations was prospectively linked to physician visits for mental health (depression, anxiety, ADHD & other mental illnesses).

## KEY MESSAGES

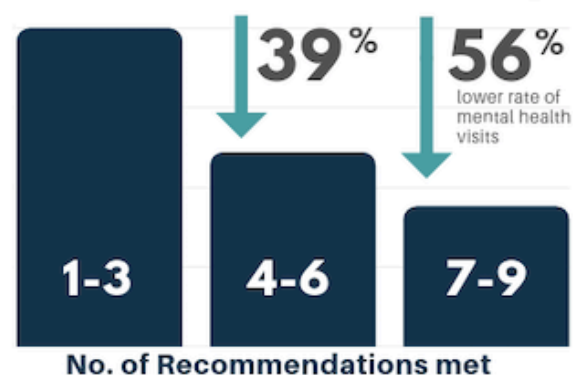
- Encouraging *multiple lifestyle behaviours* is better than single lifestyle factors
- Emphasize adherence to lifestyle recommendations to *parents, in schools, and in pediatric practices.*



On average  
Children met **5.3/9**  
recommendations

**15%** of the sample had  
a mental illness

Meeting *more recommendations*  
was associated with *lower rates of*  
mental health visits.



**15%** reduction in rate of physician visits  
for mental health with *every*  
*additional recommendation met*