

Information sheet on a nutrition study and a blood sample for a student in upper secondary level

Youth Nutrition Study

The aim of the Youth Nutrition Study is to obtain information on the eating habits of young people in Finland to support health promotion and national and municipal decision-making. The study is carried out by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) as a part of its statutory duty, the monitoring and research of population health and welfare. The study has received a favourable statement from the regional Ethics Committee of HUS University Hospital (HUS 2404/2024), and research permits have been obtained from the municipalities participating in the study. This information sheet describes the purpose of the study and participation in it. We recommend that you discuss your participation in the study with your guardian.

Implementation of the study

We are inviting a total of 3,000 students from the seventh and ninth grades of lower secondary school and the second year of upper secondary school from 17 different municipalities to participate in the study. The study will be carried out during the school year 2024–2025.

We are inviting you to two interviews that will last approximately 30–45 minutes at a time, in which we will ask you questions about food and eating. We will not criticise or evaluate you or your eating habits in any way. We will carry out the interviews at the school during lessons. The first interview will be face-to-face and the second on the phone. During the first interview, we will measure your height, weight and body composition on a scale. You do not need to take off any clothes for the measuring, except for your outdoor clothing and socks. You can participate in the interviews even if you do not participate in the measuring. At the end of the second interview, we will ask you to complete a questionnaire. It will take about 10 minutes to fill out.

You will receive date of the first interview by text message after you have given your consent. We will schedule the second interview, to be held by phone, at the first interview.

We hope you can give a blood sample. The blood sample will be taken by a healthcare professional in the school premises. Blood samples provide extremely valuable information on nutrition and metabolism. We cannot obtain such information by other methods. The blood sample will be taken before 11 in the morning. If possible, you should not eat before giving your blood sample. Drinking water is allowed. If necessary, you can have a small breakfast before giving the sample (one sandwich, or one fruit, or a yoghurt, or a small portion of porridge or cereal). You can eat and drink normally the day before the blood sample. After the sampling, we will offer you juice and a snack biscuit.

We will book the appointment at the first interview. The blood sample is taken from the crook of the elbow. You can request an anaesthetic patch for the sampling. The anaesthetic patch is placed on the spot of the blood sample about 30 minutes before the sampling. If you wish, you will receive the anaesthetic patch and instructions on how to use it at the first interview on food consumption. You can participate in the interviews even if you do not participate in the blood sampling. The consent form allows you to select which parts of the study you want to participate in.

Your guardian will receive a separate information sheet on the study. Your guardian is asked to fill out the guardian's consent form and background questionnaire.

Participating in the study

You can give your consent to participate in the study by using the personal user ID and password on the invitation card at thl.fi/nuortenravitseumus/osallistu. Your guardian can fill out their own background information form using the ID and password found on their own invitation card. It takes a few minutes to fill out the consent form. The consent forms and questionnaires are available in Finnish, Swedish and English. You can also request paper versions by sending email to: nuortenravitseumus@thl.fi

By giving your consent, you agree that your personal data will be processed according to the data protection policy and that your data from the study can be linked to health and welfare register data. The data from the study and the register data obtained can also be combined with the data and register data provided by your guardian on the background information form.

Voluntariness of participation, discontinuing participation and withdrawing consent

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the study, discontinue your participation or withdraw the consent you have previously given without having to specify a reason at any point during and after the study. If you wish to discontinue your participation in the study or withdraw your consent, contact the research staff (contact details below) or the THL registry (kirjaamo@thl.fi). If you discontinue your participation in the study, the material collected before you do so can still be used in the study. If you withdraw your consent, the data collected by the time of withdrawal will no longer be used for research purposes, but will be permanently deleted. However, if the research results have already been analysed or published, the data included cannot be deleted retroactively. Refusing to participate, discontinuing your participation or withdrawing your consent will not affect your treatment or position now or in the future.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of participating for you?

- After the study, you will receive a cinema ticket as a thank-you gift, if you so wish. If you also participate in the blood sampling, you will receive a total of two cinema tickets. You can use the tickets on films of your choice, within the age ratings.
- If you wish, we can inform you of your height and weight measurements.
- After your samples have been analysed, you will receive personal written feedback on your vitamin D level and lipids (total cholesterol, LDL, HDL and triglycerides). We will also notify you of your iron level if it differs from normal. If necessary, we will refer you to further examinations in healthcare services.
- You will also receive a leaflet on healthy eating for young people after the study.
- The disadvantage of participating in the study is the time it takes to participate.
- You may find blood sampling slightly uncomfortable. However, blood sampling from the veins in the bend of the elbow is a routine procedure performed by a healthcare professional. The sampling typically goes well, but sometimes it may be difficult to draw a blood sample. If you find the sampling extremely uncomfortable or there are problems, we will not draw blood.

Research implementer and funding

The study is carried out by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). The study is funded by THL, the EU and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Insurance cover and reimbursement for research subjects

Participation in the study is free of charge for you.

In accordance with the Tax Administration's instructions, THL will notify the Incomes Register of the value of the film ticket given as a thank-you gift, which is why it will appear in your pre-completed tax return. Please note that if you are in the preliminary tax withholding register, i.e. you are an entrepreneur, you must report the value of the film ticket to the Tax Administration.

THL has taken out insurance for the research subjects from Pohjola Insurance under the Patient Insurance Act. In accordance with the Patient Insurance Act, patient insurance covers any personal injuries caused in connection with healthcare and medical treatment based on prerequisites laid down in more detail in the Act. The Patient Insurance Centre is in charge of processing reimbursements for patient injuries.

Processing and confidentiality of research data

All parties and people involved in processing your data are bound by a confidentiality obligation. All the collected data will be processed confidentially and in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation. The data will be stored in a database which may only be accessed by the research group.

THL may combine the data obtained through the questionnaires and interviews with register data from registers maintained by different authorities and healthcare units. The register data are only used for research and statistical purposes. Personal data are used to combine register data with interview and survey responses. Once the data have been combined, any personal identifiers will be eliminated from the research data. The register follow-up stage of the study will last 70 years. In the study, the name, personal identity code and contact details of an individual research subject are replaced with a unique identification code. Your data and your guardian's data are stored encoded in the research data, and you are only referred to with an identification code. It is not possible to directly identify individual research subjects from the data used by the researchers and the study results.

THL cooperates with Finnish and international partners within the framework of cooperation agreements, and your data may only be transferred to EU/EEA countries in a manner where you cannot be directly identified. You can find more information on the processing of your personal data and your rights in the study's data protection policy: thl.fi/nuortenravitsemus/tietosuoja.

Enquiries

If you or your guardian have any questions or you would like more information, we will be happy to help. You can contact our research group by email, nuortenravitsemus@thl.fi, or by phone, +358 29 524 7253, available on weekdays 9.00–14.00.

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Thanking you for your cooperation,

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