

# The Meaning of Healthy Eating in British Columbia

*The Meaning of Healthy Eating in British Columbia* is intended to provide a consistent understanding of healthy eating for the purpose of developing policy and strategies for healthy eating in British Columbia.

## **What is Healthy Eating?**

Healthy eating is a pattern of eating that contributes to best possible health through positive relationships with food and diverse, balanced food choices that meet a person's needs for nutrients and energy.

## **Why is Healthy Eating Important?**

Healthy eating promotes and supports social, physical, and mental wellbeing for all people at all ages and stages of life and contributes to the overall health of individuals, families, and communities. Healthy eating helps minimize the risk and occurrence and supports the management of disease.

## **How is Healthy Eating Enabled?**

Supportive environments where we live, learn, work and play are fundamental to healthy eating. They provide the conditions, opportunities and resources that enable healthy eating. This includes an economically and environmentally sustainable food system that ensures food

security by providing enough nutritious food and water that is available, accessible, affordable, acceptable, and safe to all people at all times. This also includes basic knowledge and skills around food acquisition, safe food handling, meal planning, and food preparation. Healthy eating is enabled by policies and practices based on the values of health equity, diversity and autonomy.

## **Who Enables Healthy Eating in BC?**

All of society shares the individual and collective responsibility of supporting and contributing to environments that foster healthy eating. Collaboration and commitment of all levels of government, non-government organizations, industry and the media is pivotal to the creation and maintenance of healthy eating environments.

Healthy eating environments provide the conditions, opportunities and resources that support individuals, families and communities to practice healthy eating behaviours.

Developed by Dietitian Services of HealthLinkBC in consultation with Ministry of Health and Health Authority representatives from the Healthy Eating Strategy Leadership Group (November 2012)