



## NSSA NEWS BITS

### National Nutrition Week 2022: 'Make Healthy Food Choices Easier'

National Nutrition Week (NNW) is commemorated every year from 9–15 October. Each year, the National Department of Health's Nutrition Directorate coordinates a campaign with a theme that is developed with several other government departments, professional associations, health NGOs and academic partners, including the Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA). NNW 2022 aims to help people make healthy and affordable food choices every day by eating the correct amount of regular healthy meals and snacks and by being physically active.

Efforts to make healthy food choices may be influenced by perceived or encountered barriers, such

as cost, lack of nutrition knowledge, information and skills.<sup>1,2</sup> Culinary traditions, social pressure, financial uncertainty, rationing food within the family, and lack of time, availability of healthy foods, social support, adequate kitchen equipment and transportation, as well as general lack of interest in making a change to one's diet<sup>1</sup> have also been identified as barriers.<sup>2,3</sup>

In line with evidence emphasising the importance of making healthy food choices for better health and tools that can enable people to make these choices easier, the theme for the NNW 2022 is: '**Make Healthy Food Choices Easier**'. NNW 2022 has the following communication focus areas and objectives:

| Focus area  | Communication objectives  |
|---|---|
| Improved healthy food choices by household members throughout the life course | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To increase caregivers' knowledge, skill and self-efficacy to enable the caregiver to choose and to practice exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months with the introduction of appropriate and safe complementary foods from 6 months while breastfeeding continues up to 2 years and or beyond</li> <li>ii. To increase household members' self-efficacy to make healthier choices and to plan and prepare healthy and affordable family meals, including complementary foods</li> </ul> |
| Eating regular meals and healthy snacks                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To increase knowledge on the benefits of consuming regular, healthy meals</li> <li>ii. To increase self-efficacy to choose or make available healthy and affordable snack and drink alternatives to ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and sugary drinks</li> </ul>   |
| Improved consumption of healthy portions                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To increase knowledge on choosing correct portion sizes of food</li> </ul>  |
| Improved physical activity engagement by household members                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To increase knowledge on the benefits and ease of regular physical activity</li> <li>ii. To increase knowledge on the recommended minimum physical activity targets</li> <li>iii. To increase self-efficacy to engage in regular physical activity</li> </ul>   |

All nutritional professionals and students are invited to participate in the NNW 2022 campaign. For more information, please visit the website: [www.nutritionweek.co.za](http://www.nutritionweek.co.za).

#### References

1. Wongprawmas R, Sogari G, Menozzi D, Mora C. Strategies to promote healthy eating among university students: a qualitative study using the nominal group technique. *Front Nutr.* 2022;9:821016. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2022.821016>.
2. Dave JM, Thompson DI, Svendsen-Sanchez A, Cullen KW. Perspectives on Barriers to Eating Healthy Among Food Pantry Clients. *Health Equity.* 2017;1(1):1. <https://doi.org/10.1089/heq.2016.0009>.
3. Ross AM, Melzer T. Beliefs as barriers to healthy eating and physical activity. *Aust J Psychol.* 2016;68(4):251–260. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12103>.