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The intake of fruit and sweets in rural and urban Greenland--development from 1994 to 2006.

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to explore the intake of fruit and sweets in Greenlandic schoolchildren aged 11, 13 and 15 years in villages, towns and the capital by cross-sectional data collected in 4 comparative surveys from 1994 to 2006. Study design. Repeated cross-sectional study.

Data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey, with responses from 1,302 students in 1994, 1,648 in 1998, 891 in 2002 and 1,366 in 2006, each in the age groups of 11, 13 and 15 years.

From 1994 to 2006, the odds ratio for eating fruit daily showed a decline while odds for never eating fruit increased in children living in all types of habitations. For all survey years the intake of fruit was lowest in villages and in 2006 only about 15-20% of village children consumed fruit every day. No general trends were found in the daily intake of sweets or for never eating sweets. Only 6% or less of the respondents never ate sweets. Minor age group and gender differences were seen. For sweets, children in the capital in 2006 had a lower daily use than village children.

Greenland is in the process of nutritional transition. The increase in the proportion of schoolchildren that do not meet the national recommendations for daily fruit consumption and the failure to reduce children's intake of sweets is worrying. The intake of fruit was, for all years, lowest in the villages and was probably related (among other things) to cost and access. The implications of the findings are discussed.

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