

THE CORRECT SCHOOL EATING HABITS

We are students and we attend the scientific high school "Epifanio Ferdinando" in Mesagne. Our school has always been interested in offering a different eating habit but we think that in our school not all the students know about the calorie they need. This is why when our school suggested we could carry out this project in collaboration with The Mediterranean Diet Foundation, we enthusiastically decided to join it.

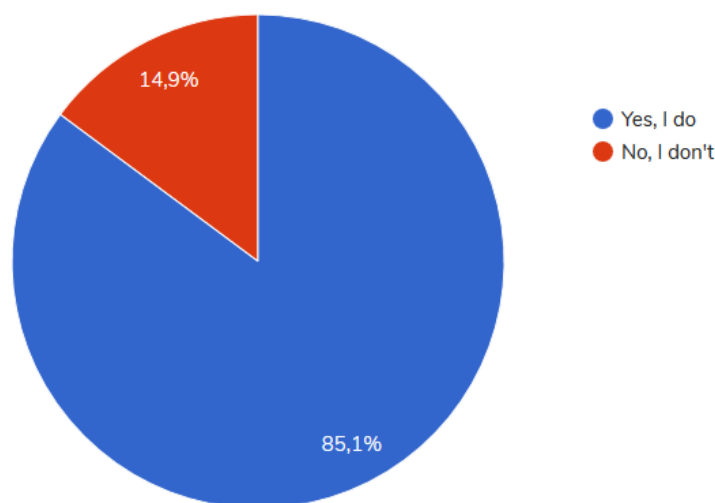
We were curious to discover the eating habits of our schoolmates, so we prepared a poll to get some information about their lifestyle. We used Google's form to create the questionnaire and then we share it through our Facebook school group and through the class representatives. To be sure that the majority of us answer it, we go in every class ourselves.

The students who answered to our questions were 278 over a school population of 360 students. They are 14 to 19 years of age.

The 20% of us don't have breakfast in the morning because of the lack of time. The 26,1% of those who have breakfast drink only a cup of coffee that is not enough to face a school day. Others, who have to take the bus to go to school, get up early and have lunch late. Furthermore, when there are activities in the afternoon, students have to remain at school. For these reasons eating something during the break is really important.

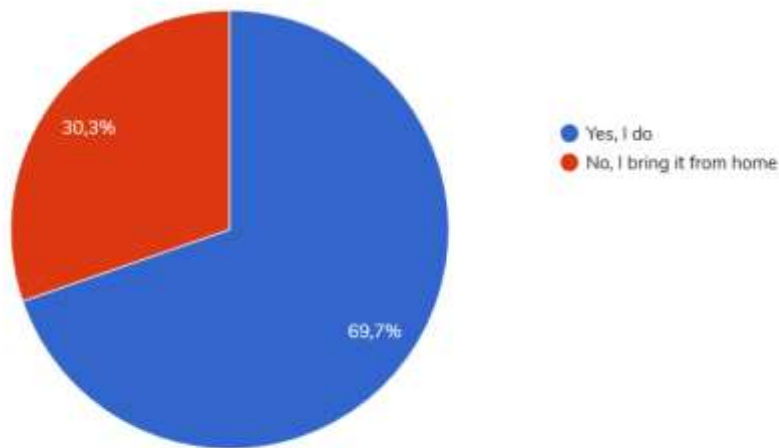
The 85,1% of the students do it, while the 14,9% stay without food during the whole school time.

Do you eat something during the school day?



The 69,7% buy snacks at school.

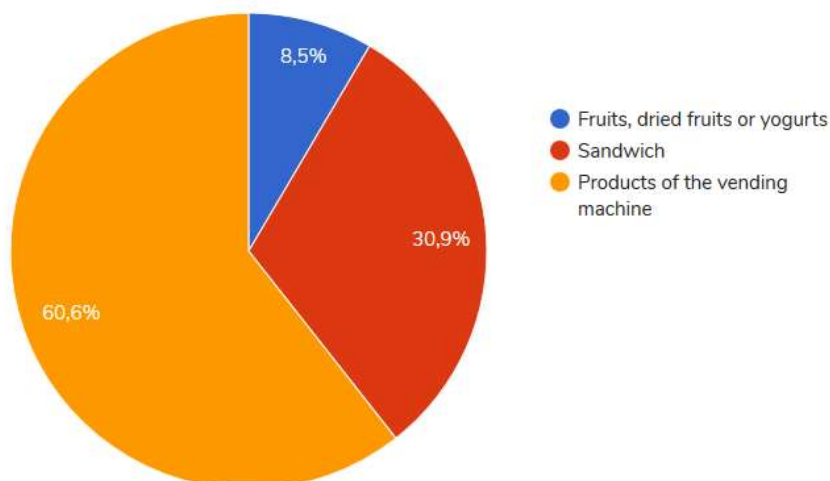
Do you buy your snack at school?



The only way to do it is by using the vending machine. It certainly doesn't sell healthy food or fresh products, these ones usually contains an high amount of preservatives or fats. In addition vending machines aren't properly clean, for this reason they could contains bacteria or mildew. We should also consider that vending machines provide a turnover of more than €2 billion, this is why we can find them everywhere. Moreover, in schools it creates a difference between those who can afford spending about €4-5 a day and those who can't. Do you think that it's a good example for young people?

The 60,6% of students eat vending machine's products like snacks, only the 8,5% eat fruits, dried fruits or yogurts bringing them from home.

What do you usually eat for snack?



All this data show that students don't know about the correct eating habits and they are not aware that their lifestyle isn't suitable to give them enough energy to follow five hours of lesson.

Firstly, the breakfast is an important moment for a student's life: the 15%-20% of the calorie intake should be taken during the breakfast, it has to be a balanced mix of carbohydrates, fats and proteins. For example a cup of milk with biscuits or rusks with jam or marmalade.

The snack also play an important role to keep the concentration high during the school activities and also not to arrive hungry at lunch. It must not be too fat like the industrial snacks, the ideal snack should be composed by fruit, like an apple, and if it is not enough, by dried fruit... just to nibble something. According to scientific studies, mediterranean nuts, like almonds, walnuts, pistachios, hazelnuts, pine, has medicinal benefits.

In conclusion we need something that fits to our needs. It should be easier to find natural products, in particular for us that live in the south of Italy where plantation are large diffuses. As recognized by UNESCO, Mediterranean diet is one of the World Heritage Sites because of its wealth and value. Furthermore it fights against some eating disorder like obesity which is one of the most diffuses problems affecting young people. Considering the 25,8% of students that doesn't want healthier food, our participation to this project aim to promote a different kind of food in schools. It can be done by educating students to the correct nutrition and offering them healthy and local products. Our headmaster give us his support to improve school service and eating education for the future. We will continue this project extending and improving it

Do you want healthier food at school?

