

**FACTORS RELATED TO HEALTHY EATING BEHAVIORS  
AMONG FIRST YEAR MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS,  
IN SALAYA, NAKHON PATHOM, THAILAND**

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**ABSTRACT**

This cross-sectional study was conducted to identify factors influencing healthy eating behaviors in first year students of Mahidol University in Salaya. 268 self-administered questionnaires were obtained from students who were approached randomly at campus' cafeterias on January 24-25, 2007. Chi-square test and Fisher's exact test were used for analysis along with frequency distribution of variables.

The result showed that 68.3% of students had healthy eating behaviors at fair level. In the period of 6-7days of the past week students could recall what they ate with summarized food frequency question, 45.9% of responding students ate from the five food groups, followed by vegetable at 41.8%, fruit at 44%. The factors significantly associated with healthy eating behaviors of the total respondents were availability ( $p < 0.001$ ) and ease of choosing food for eating healthily ( $p = 0.003$ ) as enabling factors, formal or non-formal health education in school ( $p = 0.034$ ) and leaflets ( $p = 0.003$ ) as healthy eating information sources of reinforcing factors.

Better availability of healthy food should be sustained to encourage students' healthy eating. Students who had healthy eating information from health education at school or leaflets were more likely to practice healthy eating behaviors at a good level. This emphasizes the need to support of health education for the nutritional well-being of students.

**KEY WORDS: EATING BEHAVIOR/ FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT/AVAILABILITY OF FOOD**

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