



## Evaluation Studies

Evaluation is an important part of the success of **Sip Smart! BC**. Throughout the development year, teachers, students and experts were consulted on an ongoing basis, and their feedback was incorporated into the evolving program.

**Sip Smart! BC** was evaluated by the Social Research and Development Corporation (SRDC).

### Impact on Student Beverage Consumption

In Fall 2008, grade 4 students in 20 schools across BC were involved in a study conducted by the Social Research and Development Corporation (SRDC) to see if **Sip Smart! BC** made a difference in students' sugary drink consumption, types of beverages chosen, and knowledge and preferences for different drinks.

The study compared grade 4 classes who participated in **Sip Smart! BC** with grade 4 classes who did not participate in the program. Researchers asked students to record all the drinks they had for three different days using a "Drink Diary" and to complete a pre- and post- test of questions related to **Sip Smart! BC** key messages and drink preferences.

In the short term:

- **Sip Smart! BC** had increased students' awareness knowledge that soft drinks, fruity drinks, sports drinks and slurpees are unhealthy choices.
- **Sip Smart! BC** decreased students' preferences for pop, fruity drinks, sports drinks and slurpees, suggesting that the program may have successfully delivered the message about sugary drinks.
- **Sip Smart! BC** reduced sugar intake from beverages for students in the program classrooms, and this occurred particularly in the group of students who consumed 25 or more sugar cubes of sugar a day from their beverage intake.

The finding of increased awareness and knowledge about sugary drinks observed at the mid-program period persisted. This is likely the strongest outcome for **Sip Smart! BC**. The evidence suggests students in the program classes

retained some, but not all, of their knowledge about healthy beverages they received from the program — many more students in the program group knew fruity drinks and sports drinks are not healthy choices. However, there were still indications that this new knowledge diminished over time.

As expected, outcomes observed after just two lessons were short-lived, leading to recommendations that the program be lengthened and key messages reinforced for a longer period of time.

The program was subsequently split into 5 lessons (rather than 3), and program communications encourage teachers to deliver the Extension Activities included in program materials. The program content was intact - the activities were simply allocated to shorter but more frequent lessons.

### Program Implementation in BC Classrooms

Data was collected from May to June 2010 from the **Sip Smart! BC** Project Manager, Action Schools! BC, Community Nutritionists, Teachers and 198 Grade 5 and 6 students.

The aim of the evaluation was to gain a clear understanding of how the Teacher Resource was implemented, delivered, and promoted to teachers in BC schools.

The evaluation indicates that the promotion, distribution and use of the resource was implemented well.

### Teacher feedback

Similar to the earlier evaluation results, teachers liked the **Sip Smart! BC** Teacher Resource and found it to be user friendly, feeling that it contained materials and lesson guides that were ready to use and involved little advanced preparation.

Teachers also preferred to use the hard copy materials, and showed less interest in using the online resources and activities.

### Student feedback

Grade 5 and 6 students who participated in one of eight focus groups recalled many of the messages of the **Sip Smart! BC** program and responded favourably to the activities in which they were engaged.

The consumption of sugary drinks that students reported in the focus groups is consistent with findings from the evaluation of the **Sip Smart! BC** pilot project.

### Recommendations

Follow-ups with teachers who received the Teacher Resource to remind them to use the resources would be key and necessary to ensuring delivery of all the lessons in the classrooms.