



# The daily mix of food, drink, and screen in the life of an adolescent

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## Background and objective

- Adolescents spend hours on mobile devices every day<sup>1</sup>, sometimes while eating or drinking.
- More calories are consumed in the short term when simultaneously using a screen.<sup>2</sup>
- In the longer term, there are associations between frequent mobile use and preferences for unhealthy products.<sup>3,4</sup>

**Aim:** To shed light on how often, which meals, what type of products, and which experiences the young engage in when mixing food, drinks, and screens.

## Methods

- **Survey** with 76 female and 83 male students at three urban schools (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade: 10-12 years; 10<sup>th</sup> grade: 14-15 years).
- **In-depth interviews** with a subset of students (N=32), including activities with photo stimuli (Fig. 1) and screen-based selection of product categories typically consumed when using a digital device (Fig. 2).



Figure 1. Examples of photo stimuli used in the interviews, which illustrate solitary (left) and social (right) settings for interactions with both food and digital devices (photos by Tina Dawson, Ketut Subiyanto, Ryan Plomp, and Maksim Goncharoenok, from top to bottom, left to right).

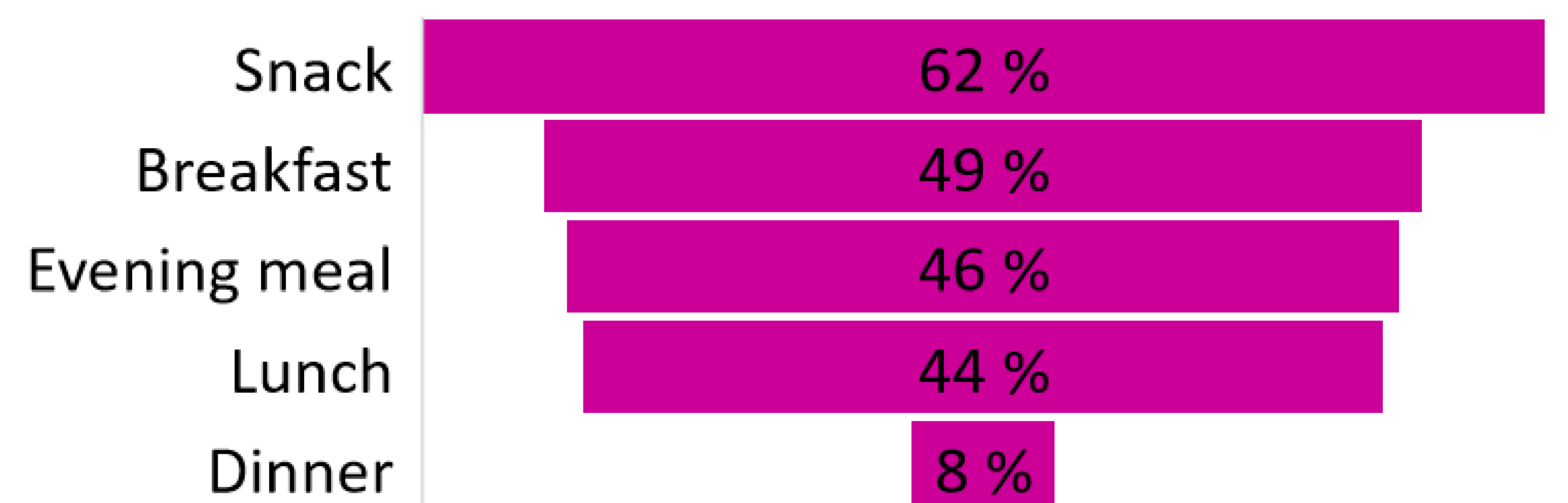


Figure 2. Share of survey respondents who indicated meals they typically consumed with a screen.

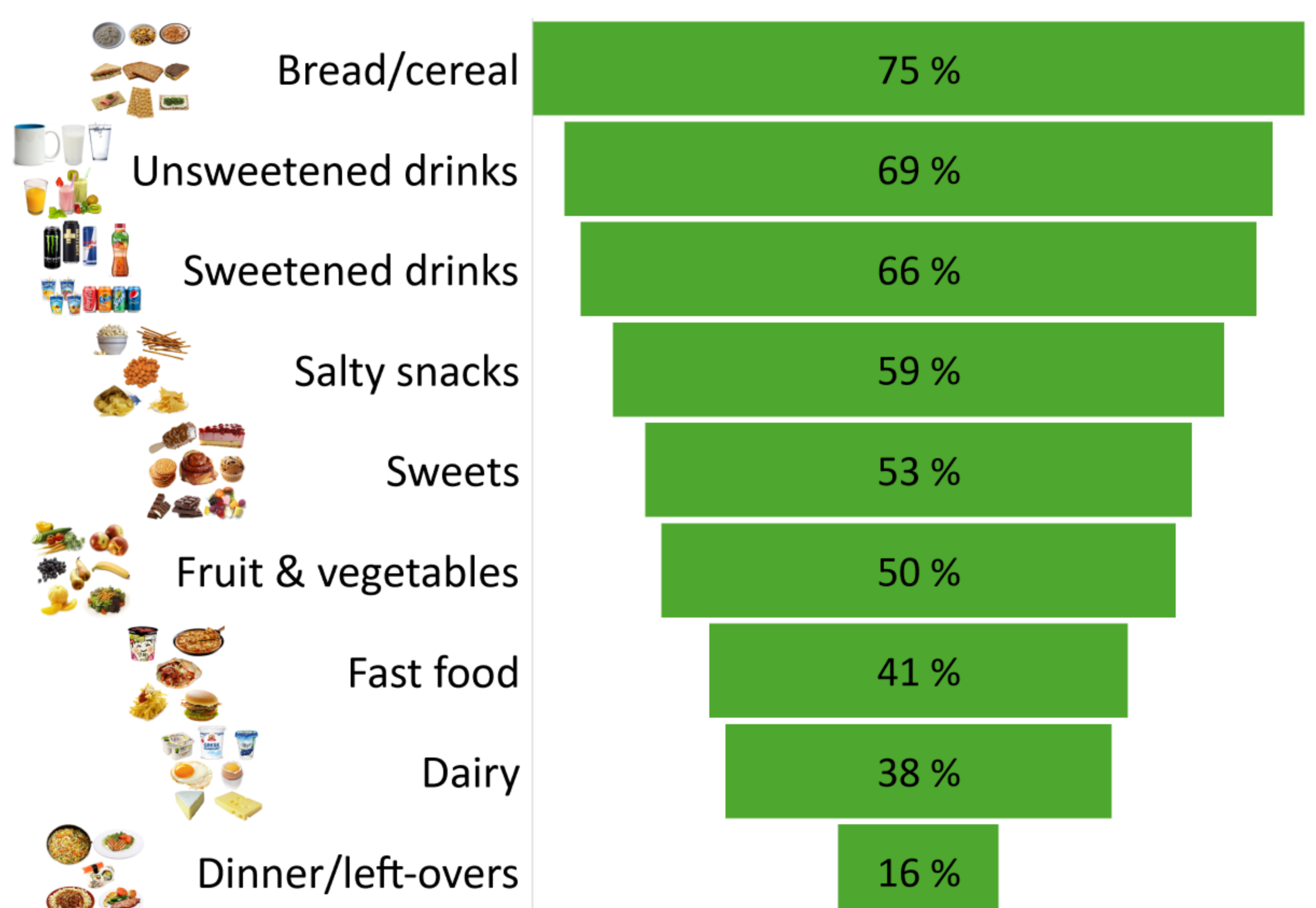


Figure 3. Categories selected by interview participants as typical food and drinks accompanying screens

## Survey results

- 76% of the younger and 94 % of the older respondents eat with a screen at least once per day.
- About half have breakfast with a device, more common still was a snack between meals (Fig. 2).

## Interview results

- When eating in front of a screen,
  - 75% consume bread or cereals (Fig. 3).
  - ≈70 % consume unsweetened drinks, sweetened drinks, salty snacks, sweet snacks, and fruit or vegetables (Fig. 3).
- Adolescents express dislike to using mobile devices while sharing a meal with others, but positive attitudes to doing the same when alone.

## Discussion

Adolescents mix food, drinks, and screens daily.

Food and digital content consumed together as a treat, to pass time, for company, or for more utilitarian purposes.

➤ **Dietary advice for healthy eating should consider digital contexts.**

## References

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- <sup>2</sup>Andersen, T., Byrne, D. V., & Wang, Q. J. (2021). How digital food affects our analog lives: The impact of food photography on healthy eating behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 634261.
- <sup>3</sup>Gascoyne, C., Scully, M., Wakefield, M., & Morley, B. (2021). Food and drink marketing on social media and dietary intake in Australian adolescents: Findings from a cross-sectional survey. *Appetite*, 166, 105431.
- <sup>4</sup>Giese, H., König, L. M., Täut, D., Ollila, H., Băban, A., Absetz, P., Schupp, H., & Renner, B. (2015). Exploring the association between television advertising of healthy and unhealthy foods, self-control, and food intake in three European countries. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 7(1), 41-62.