



Consumption of Unhealthy Snack Foods and Beverages amongst children under 2 years in Oudomxay and Houaphan, Lao PDR



DATA COLLECTION



305 quantitative
surveys in 16
villages

8 Focus Group
Discussions

14 shop-owners
interviewed

9 health /
nutrition staff
interviewed

Unhealthy Snack Foods and Beverages

"food products that are often energy-dense, nutrient-poor and high in salt, sugar, saturated and/or trans fatty acids."- WHO

Unhealthy food

Candies, chocolate, and other sugar confections

Frozen treats such as ice cream or similar confections

Cakes, pastries, sweet biscuits, and other baked or fried confections

Chips, crisps, cheese puffs, French fries, fried dough, instant noodles, and similar items

Unhealthy Beverages

Commercially produced and packaged, sweetened beverages (soda pop, fruit-flavoured drinks, sports drinks, chocolate and other flavoured milk drinks, malt drinks)

Sweet beverages including 100% fruit juice as well as fruit-flavoured drinks, whether made at home, by informal vendors or packaged in cans, bottles, boxes, sachets

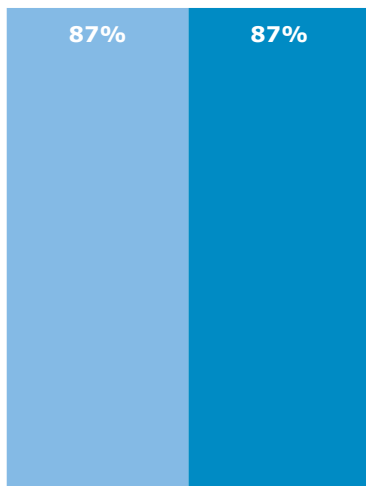
Sweet beverages include home-made drinks of any kind to with sweeteners (sugar, honey, syrup, flavoured powders).

KEY FINDINGS

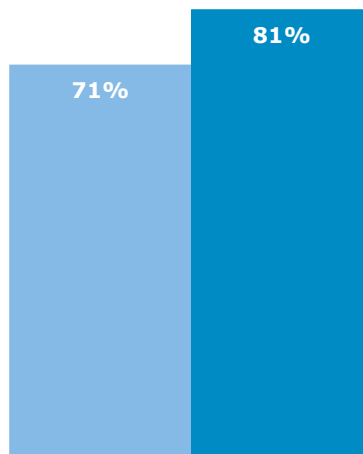


Prevalence of Consumption

■ Houaphan ■ Oudomxay



Unhealthy snacks

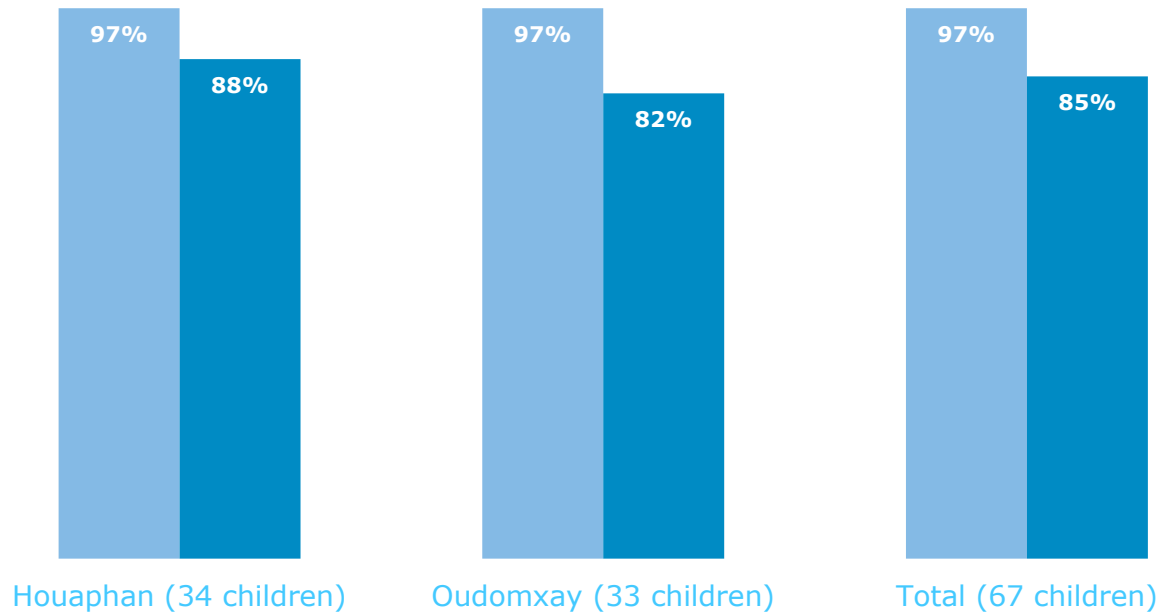


Unhealthy drinks

More than 70% of children between 6 and 23 months had consumed unhealthy snacks and unhealthy drinks in the previous 7 days.

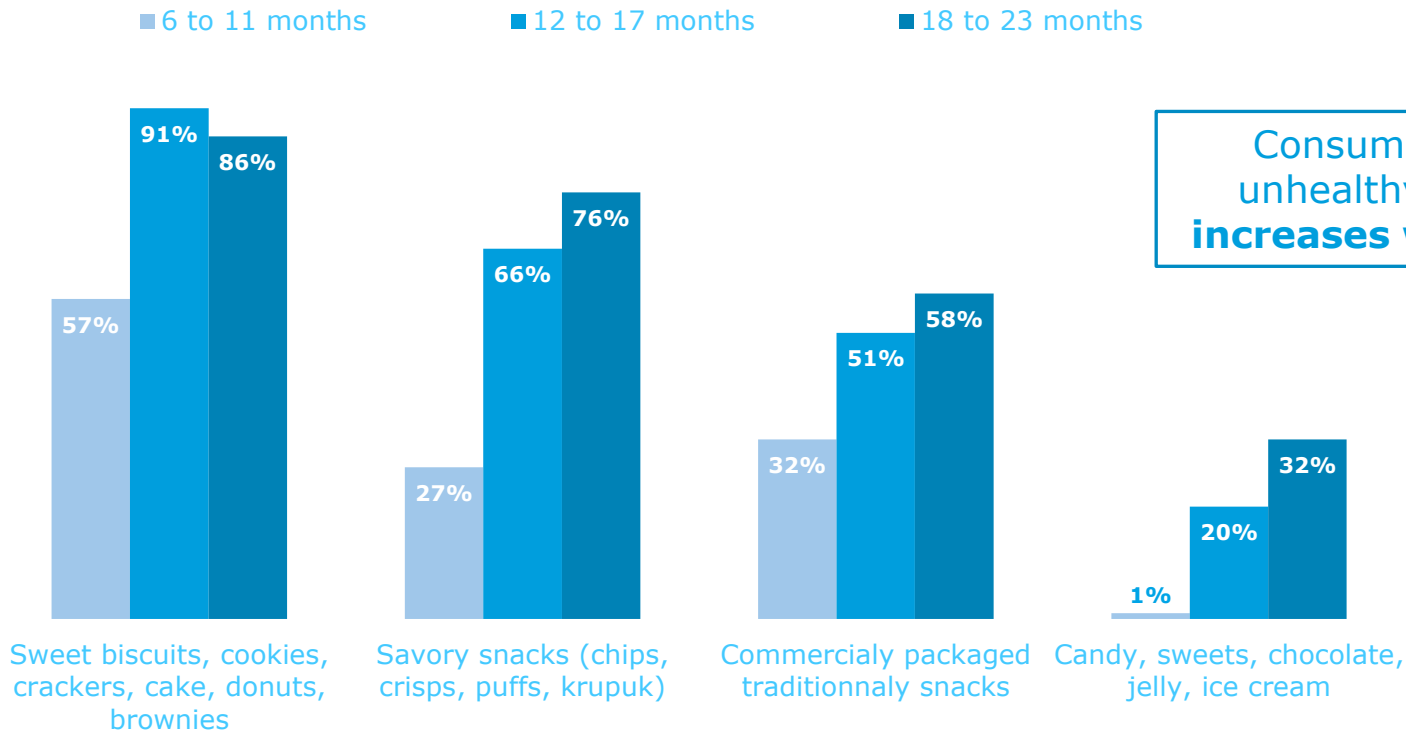
Consumption prevalence amongst children 0-5 months

■ Ever breastfed ■ Exclusively breastfed

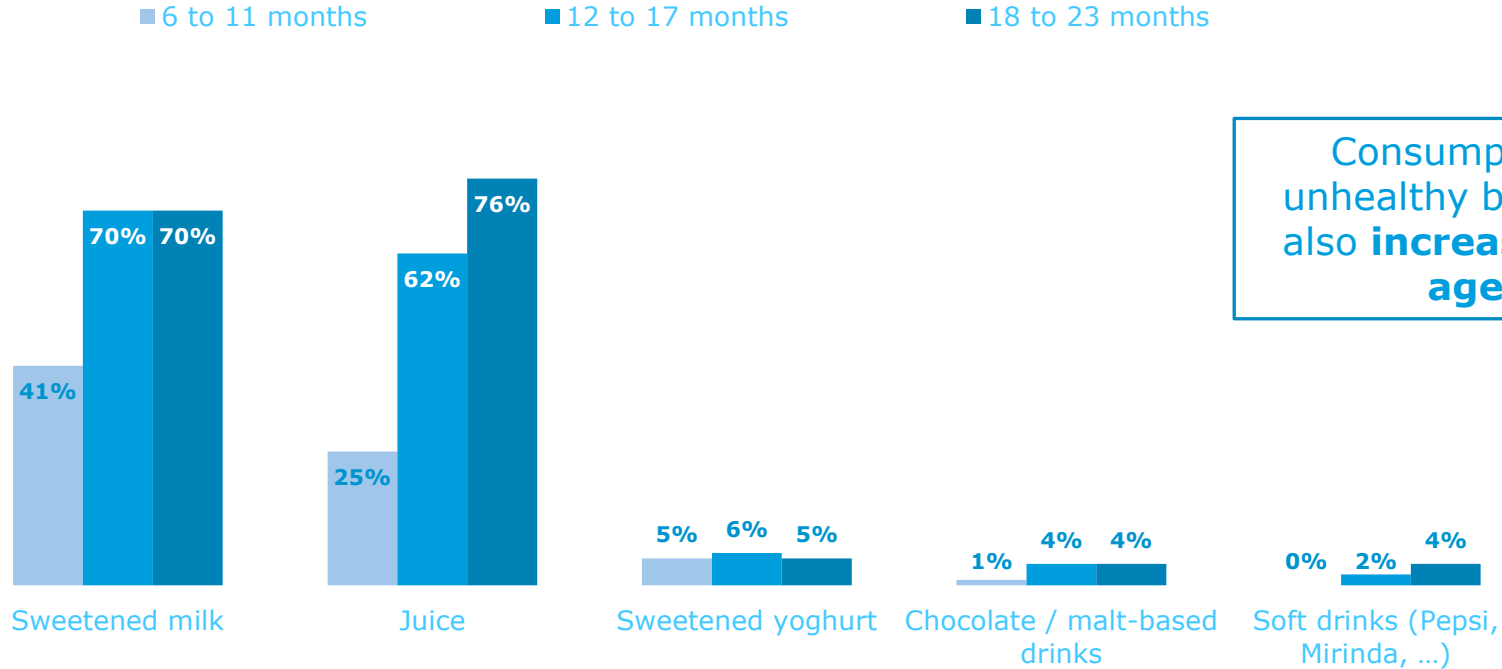


The children who were not exclusively breastfed received mostly infant formula or water, and in some cases, thin porridge. **They were not given unhealthy snacks.**

Key Findings – Commercially packaged Snack consumption



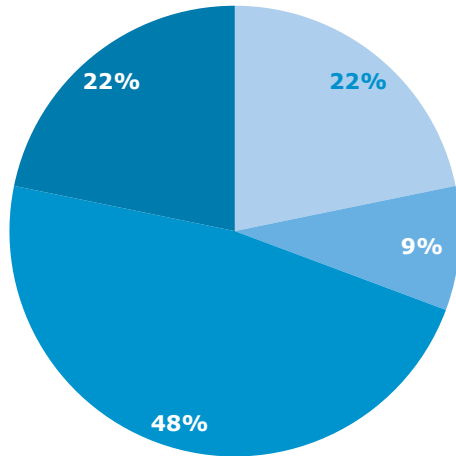
Key Findings – Consumption of packaged beverages



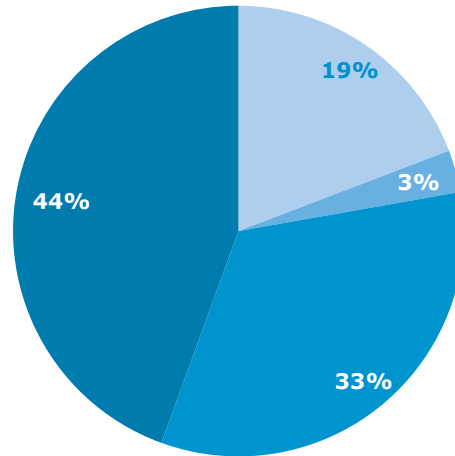
Key Findings – Frequency

More than 20% of children are consuming unhealthy snacks and beverages **everyday**.

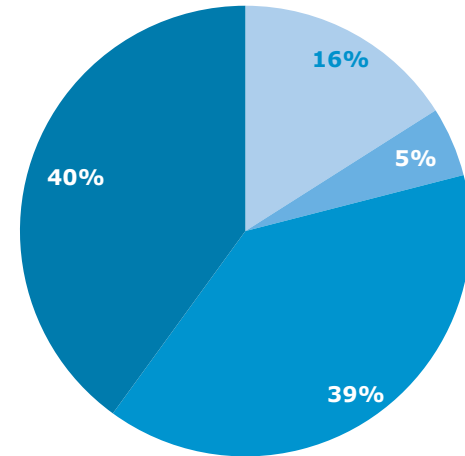
Every day At least 4 days a week Between 1 and 3 days a week Never



Sweet biscuit,
cookies, crackers



Savoury snacks
(chips, puffs,
krupuk)

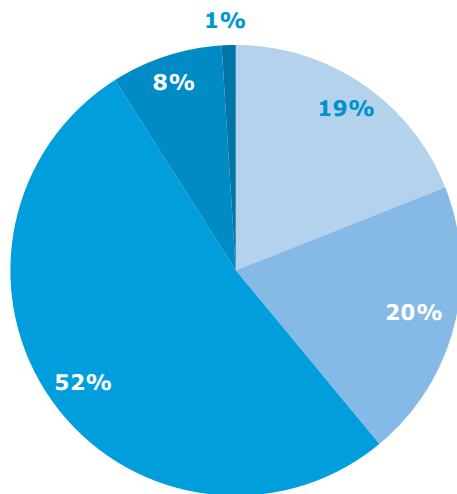


Sweetened
Milk

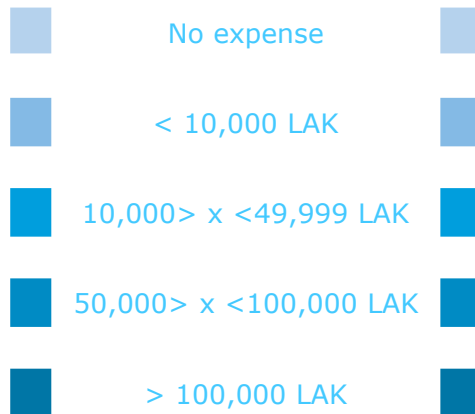
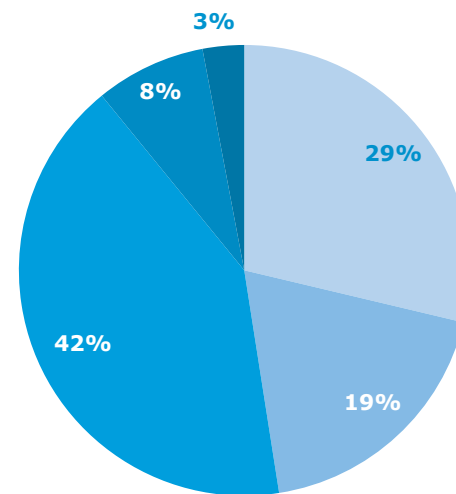
Key Findings – Expenditures

50% of caregivers
spend between
10,000-50,000 KIP
per week on unhealthy
snacks

Sweet and savoury snacks



Sweet Beverage



Key Findings – Perception

They make him/her happy | 82%

They are convenient, easy to prepare or buy | 79%

They are cheap | 48%

They are good for health | 46%

They are rewards for good behaviour | 38%

They are part of our family or cultural tradition | 31%

I have seen publicity/advertisement for these | 27%

**Child's happiness
and convenience**
main reasons to offer
unhealthy snacks and
beverages

Recommendations

National Level

- Integrate discouragement strategies targeting unhealthy snack foods and beverages in the national SBCC strategy
- Provide incentives to local enterprises with broader distribution capacities to produce healthier options
- Tax unhealthy foods and beverages
- Implement food labelling and marketing policies

Development partners

- Utilize existing village structures to promote healthy snacking (i.e. village volunteers, outreach programs)
- Introduce easy recipes for healthy snacking in cooking demonstration activities using available ingredients
- Work with local vendors (formal and informal) to supply convenient, healthy snacks year-round
- Build the capacity of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) to produce and market healthy snacks and beverages
- Invest in nutrition-sensitive value chain projects with a focus on local food environments



QUESTIONS?