

Nourish Now: A Science Dialogue on Improving Adolescent Health through Nutrition



Funded by Beef Farmers and Ranchers

Publications:

- Proceedings from Nourish Now: A science dialogue on improving adolescent health through nutrition (Ferruzzi et al., 2026)
- Call to action: the future of evidence-based, adolescent-focused dietary guidance (Bailey et al., 2026)



Among all life stages, adolescents have the **greatest demand for nutrients** to support rapid growth and development, yet **diet quality** during this life stage is at its **lowest** — a situation compounded by **unique physiological, social, and behavioral challenges**.

Nourish Now Meeting Objectives:

1

Demonstrate the need for balanced dietary patterns to address the unique nutritional needs and gaps of adolescents.

3

Identify barriers and challenges for adolescents to consume nutritionally adequate diets.

2

Highlight the nutrition-related health challenges affecting adolescents, as well as the potential public health impact of these issues.

4

Identify research needs and opportunities to better support evidence-based dietary guidance to effectively improve the health and wellbeing of adolescents.

Key Takeaways:

- Poor adolescent diet quality = compromised long-term physical development, academic performance, and chronic disease risk.
- The modern food environment drives adolescents toward convenience over nutrient density, putting them at risk of falling short on the nutrients their growing bodies and brains need most.
- Current dietary guidance does not adequately address adolescence as a distinct life stage. Evidence-based, age- and milestone-specific research, clearer messaging, and realistic food- and behavior-based strategies are urgently needed.
- Beef is a practical, nutrient-dense, complete protein food that can help fill critical gaps in adolescent diets.



Call to Action:



Proceedings:



Read the papers here!