

## **Role of the nutritionist in promoting healthy eating and preventing eating disorders in the school environment: a literature review**

*Atuação do nutricionista na promoção da alimentação saudável e na prevenção de transtornos alimentares no ambiente escolar: uma revisão de literatura*

*Actuación del nutricionista en la promoción de la alimentación saludable y en la prevención de trastornos alimentarios en el entorno escolar: una revisión de la literatura*

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### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** Healthy eating is one of the main determinants of health promotion, and adolescence represents a period of particular nutritional vulnerability, marked by the formation of eating habits and exposure to idealized body standards. In this context, eating disorders emerge as a relevant public health problem, and the school is recognized as a strategic space for health promotion actions, in which the nutritionist can play a central role. **Objective:** To analyze the strategies that nutritionists can develop in the school environment to promote healthy eating and the impact of this work on the prevention of eating disorders among adolescents. **Methodology:** This is a descriptive and exploratory literature review, with searches in the SciELO, PubMed, and Virtual Health Library databases. Primary articles published between 2022 and 2026, in Portuguese, English, or Spanish, were included, resulting in a sample of seven studies. **Results and Discussion:** The evidence indicates that participatory strategies, such as workshops, conversation circles, and group activities, are more effective than expository approaches in promoting healthy eating and in encouraging reflection on body image. Exposure to social media appears as a factor associated with body dissatisfaction and risky eating behaviors. It was also observed that most actions are sporadic and that the nutritionist's participation remains limited, although their work becomes more effective when integrated into an interdisciplinary team. **Conclusion:** Nutritionists hold a strategic position in promoting healthy eating and preventing eating disorders in the school environment, provided that their work is continuous and integrated into a multiprofessional team.

### **Keywords:**

Adolescent; School Environment; Food and Nutrition Education; Nutritionist; Eating Disorders.

### **Resumo:**

**Introdução:** A alimentação saudável constitui um dos principais determinantes da promoção da saúde, e a adolescência representa um período de especial vulnerabilidade nutricional, marcado pela formação de hábitos alimentares e pela exposição a padrões corporais idealizados. Nesse contexto, os transtornos alimentares despontam como problema relevante de saúde pública, sendo a escola reconhecida como espaço estratégico para ações de promoção da saúde, nas quais o nutricionista pode desempenhar papel central. **Objetivo:** Analisar as estratégias que o nutricionista pode desenvolver no ambiente escolar para a promoção da alimentação saudável e o impacto dessa atuação na prevenção de transtornos alimentares em adolescentes. **Metodologia:** Trata-se de uma revisão de literatura de caráter descritivo e exploratório, com busca nas bases SciELO, PubMed e Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde. Foram incluídos artigos primários publicados entre 2022 e 2026, em português, inglês ou espanhol, resultando em uma amostra de sete estudos. **Resultados e Discussão:** As evidências indicam que estratégias

participativas, como oficinas, rodas de conversa e dinâmicas em grupo, são mais eficazes do que abordagens expositivas na promoção da alimentação saudável e na reflexão sobre imagem corporal. A exposição às redes sociais aparece como fator associado à insatisfação corporal e a comportamentos alimentares de risco. Observou-se, ainda, que a maioria das ações é pontual e que a participação do nutricionista permanece limitada, embora seu trabalho ganhe efetividade quando articulado a uma equipe interdisciplinar. Conclusão: O nutricionista ocupa posição estratégica na promoção da alimentação saudável e na prevenção dos transtornos alimentares no ambiente escolar, desde que sua atuação seja contínua e integrada a uma equipe multiprofissional.

**Palavras-chave:**

Adolescente; Ambiente Escolar; Educação Alimentar e Nutricional; Nutricionista; Transtornos Alimentares.

**Resumen:**

La alimentación saludable constituye uno de los principales determinantes de la promoción de la salud, y la adolescencia representa un período de especial vulnerabilidad nutricional, marcado por la formación de hábitos alimentarios y la exposición a estándares corporales idealizados. En este contexto, los trastornos alimentarios surgen como un importante problema de salud pública, siendo la escuela reconocida como un espacio estratégico para acciones de promoción de la salud, en las cuales el nutricionista puede desempeñar un papel central. Objetivo: Analizar las estrategias que el nutricionista puede desarrollar en el entorno escolar para promover la alimentación saludable y el impacto de esta actuación en la prevención de trastornos alimentarios en adolescentes. Metodología: Se trata de una revisión de la literatura de carácter descriptivo y exploratorio, con búsqueda en las bases de datos SciELO, PubMed y Biblioteca Virtual en Salud. Se incluyeron artículos primarios publicados entre 2022 y 2026, en portugués, inglés o español, resultando en una muestra de siete estudios. Resultados y Discusión: Las evidencias indican que las estrategias participativas, como talleres, ruedas de conversación y dinámicas grupales, son más eficaces que los enfoques expositivos para promover la alimentación saludable y la reflexión sobre la imagen corporal. La exposición a las redes sociales aparece como un factor asociado a la insatisfacción corporal y a comportamientos alimentarios de riesgo. También se observó que la mayoría de las acciones son puntuales y que la participación del nutricionista sigue siendo limitada, aunque su trabajo se vuelve más efectivo cuando se articula con un equipo interdisciplinario. Conclusión: El nutricionista ocupa una posición estratégica en la promoción de la alimentación saludable y en la prevención de los trastornos alimentarios en el entorno escolar, siempre que su actuación sea continua e integrada a un equipo multiprofesional.

**Palabras clave:**

Adolescente; Entorno Escolar; Educación Alimentaria y Nutricional; Nutricionista; Trastornos Alimentarios.

## INTRODUCTION

Adequate and healthy nutrition is one of the main determinants of health promotion and disease prevention throughout life (WHO, 2021). The Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population define healthy eating as respecting food culture, being accessible, and contributing

to the reduction of the risk of Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases (NCDs) (BRAZIL, 2014). In adolescence, the age range between 10 and 19 years, this issue becomes especially relevant, as it is a period of multiple physical, psychological, and social changes that directly influence the eating habits of young people (BRAZIL, 2014).

In this sense, adolescents represent a group of high nutritional vulnerability, since energy and nutrient needs increase due to accelerated growth, while young people begin to make food choices with more autonomy, under the strong influence of social networks, peer groups, and body standards idealized by the media (Silva; Mura, 2022). This scenario favors both the adoption of inadequate eating practices and, in more serious cases, the development of eating disorders, conditions that compromise the physical and mental health of adolescents (Alvarenga; Scagliusi ; Philippi, 2022).

Eating disorders (EDs) are serious mental disorders, defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR) as persistent alterations in eating behavior that cause significant impairment in physical health and psychosocial functioning (American Psychiatric Association). Association, 2022). The most common forms are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder (Alvarenga; Scagliusi ; Philippi, 2022).

It is estimated that eating disorders affect about 9% of the world's population throughout their lives, with a higher incidence in adolescence and early adulthood, especially among women ( Galmiche). *et al.*, 2019). In Brazil, studies indicate that between 10% and 25% of adolescents exhibit risk behaviors for some type of eating disorder, and dissatisfaction with one's own body appears as one of the main associated factors (Leal *et al.*, 2013).

Given this scenario, the school stands out as a privileged environment for the development of health promotion actions (Schmitz *et al.*, 2008). Because it concentrates adolescents in the habit-forming phase and has a structure that allows for continuous and organized work, it is internationally recognized as a strategic space for health education (WHO, 2021).

In Brazil, the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) has consolidated this role by guaranteeing nutritionally adequate meals and stimulating food and nutrition education practices in public schools (BRASIL, 2009). Despite this, the reality of Brazilian schools still presents obstacles to the consolidation of these practices, such as the lack of trained professionals, the discontinuity of educational actions, and the absence of protocols aimed at preventing eating disorders in the school environment (Padilha; Germani, 2023).

At the same time, the increase in cases of body dissatisfaction and risky eating behaviors among adolescents shows that existing initiatives, in isolation, have not been able to meet the

demand (Leal *et al.* , 2013). It is therefore necessary to investigate how nutritionists can contribute more effectively to this scenario, strengthening both the promotion of healthy eating and the prevention of eating disorders in the school context (Vasconcelos; Calado, 2011).

Nutritionists, as professionals qualified to work in both clinical and public health settings, occupy an important position within the school environment (CFN, 2018). In this context, their work includes planning Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) initiatives, early identification of risk behaviors for eating disorders, and collaborative work with teachers, psychologists, and families (Vasconcelos; Calado, 2011). Even so, the presence of these professionals in Brazilian schools remains limited and uneven, with gaps ranging from the absence of specific regulations to the lack of preparedness of other education professionals to deal with issues related to food and body image (Padilha; Germani, 2023).

Considering this scenario, understanding which strategies nutritionists can develop in schools to promote healthy eating and prevent eating disorders in adolescents is a relevant issue, especially given the worsening dietary patterns and the increasing aesthetic pressure affecting this group (Rosa; Jamas -Pereira; Souza, 2024). Thus, the objective of this article is to analyze, through a literature review, the strategies that nutritionists can develop in the school environment to promote healthy eating, as well as the impact of this action on the prevention of eating disorders in adolescents.

Although studies addressing healthy eating, eating behavior, and eating disorders in adolescence exist, reviews specifically analyzing the role of nutritionists as strategic agents within the school environment, especially considering their participation in health promotion and prevention of eating disorders, are still limited. Therefore, it is relevant to gather and discuss the available evidence regarding this professional role.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This work consists of a descriptive and exploratory literature review that aims to answer the following guiding question: "What is the contribution of the nutritionist's role in the school environment to the promotion of healthy eating and the prevention of eating disorders in adolescents?"

Scientific database. The Electronic Library Online (SciELO), the US National Library of Medicine ( PubMed ), and the Virtual Health Library (BVS) were used to combine the terms.



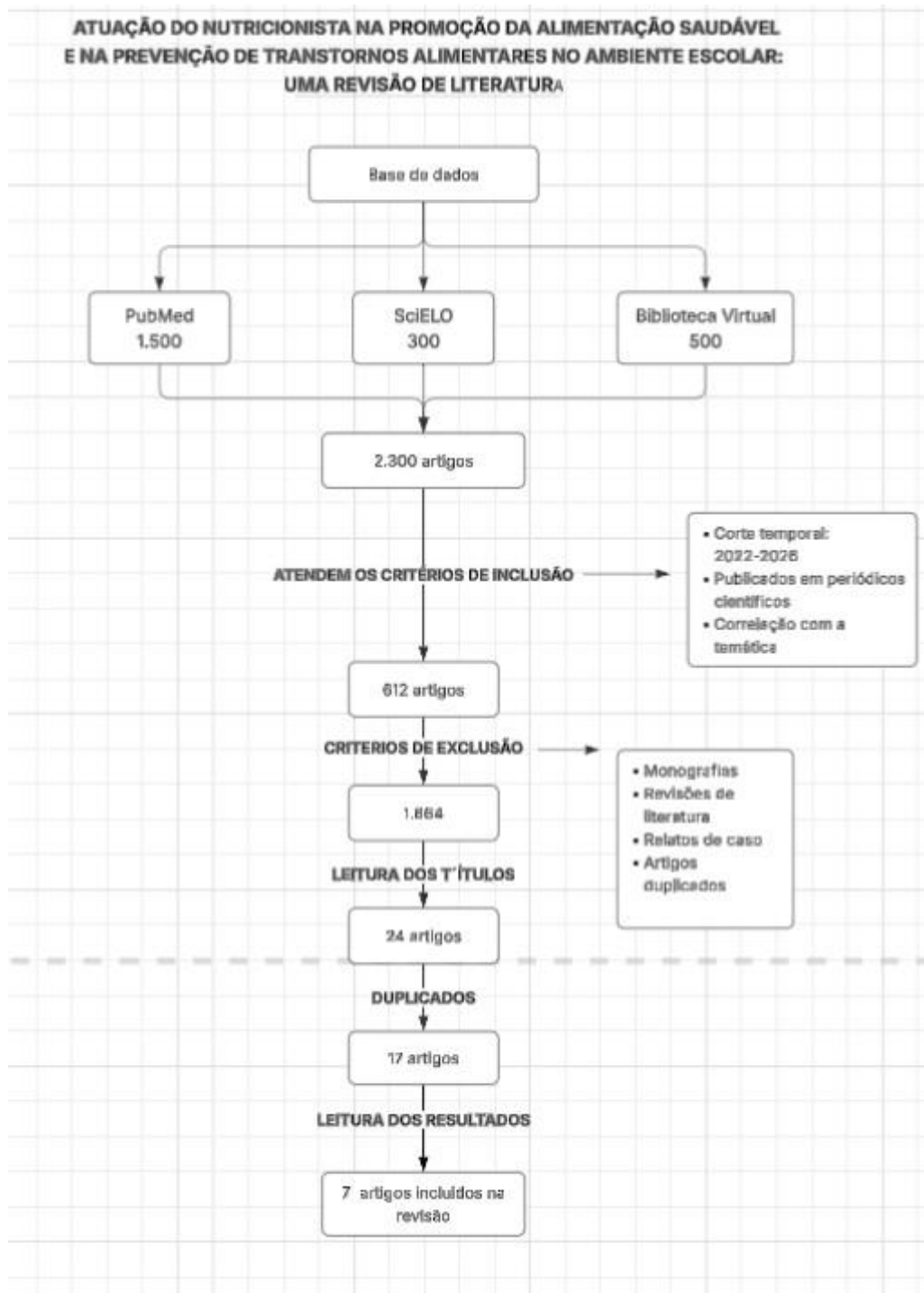
Boolean operators AND and OR were applied, with AND used to cross-reference central concepts and OR employed between equivalent or complementary terms. The selected keywords were: "Nutritionist," "School Environment," and "Eating Disorders and Food and Nutrition Education," using their English equivalents for searches in international databases.

Primary articles published between 2022 and 2026, available in Portuguese, English, or Spanish, that addressed the role of nutritionists in promoting healthy eating and preventing eating disorders, especially in the context of the school environment and adolescence, were included. Considering the scarcity of studies that directly address the role of nutritionists in this scenario, works that, even if they did not explicitly mention this professional, presented strategies and tools specific to their work, such as food and nutrition education actions, were also considered. Duplicate studies, monographs, dissertations, theses, editorials, letters to the editor, event abstracts, and articles not directly related to the proposed theme were excluded.

Data collection was conducted in sequential stages. Initially, a search for studies was carried out in the selected databases using the defined descriptors. Next, titles and abstracts were read to select articles that met the inclusion criteria. After this screening, the selected texts were read in full, which made it possible to identify the main evidence regarding the nutritionist's strategies in the school context aimed at promoting healthy eating and preventing eating disorders in adolescents.

Figure 1 presents the article selection flowchart. 2,300 articles were identified in the consulted databases. After removing 612 duplicates, 1,688 articles remained for screening by title and abstract, of which 1,664 were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria. Of the 24 articles selected for full-text reading, 17 were excluded because they did not directly address the proposed theme or because they were monographs and literature reviews. In the end, seven articles comprised the sample for this review.

**Figure 1 - Flowchart for selecting articles for review.**



**Source:** prepared by the authors, 2026.

Table 1 below presents a summary of the studies selected for this review, detailing the authors, year of publication, study location, methodological design, sample size (N), objectives, methodology applied, and the main findings of each study that underpinned the analysis developed in this work.

**Table 1 - Summary of articles analyzed for the review**

Article	Author, year, location	Type of study and N	Objectives	Methodology	Key findings
1	Secon <i>et al.</i> 2023 Brazil	Study qualitative, cross-sectional. N = 35 students (15-18 years old)	To promote Healthy eating among teenagers through interdisciplinary approach in the school environment.	Discussion groups, workshops, and activities with high school students in a public school.	Participatory strategies fostered autonomy. to feed, expansion of knowledge of nutritional needs and more conscious food choices, highlighting potential of educational actions in the school context.
2	Batista <i>et al.</i> 2026 Brazil (BH)	Comparative, observational study. N = teenagers in the 9th grade and 1st year of high school	Compare the educational action of promoting nutrition. healthy and prevention of Eating disorders in a state school.	Roundtable discussion moderated by undergraduate students in the health field, with material pedagogical Adapted for use in a youth-friendly language.	There was high engagement from teenagers, especially in topics related to body image and mental health, demonstrating relevance of contextualized educational strategies.
3	Silva, ME R. <i>et al.</i> 2024 Brazil (PI)	Study qualitative, exploratory and descriptive. N = 42 teenagers school public	To promote Food and nutrition education through workshops on good eating practices. For teenagers.	Practical workshops in a public school in Teresina, with playful and educational activities about healthy eating.	The workshops broadened food repertoire and stimulated experimentation feed and encourage A critical reflection on eating habits.

4	Raut <i>et al.</i> 2024 Nepal	Study of longitudinal intervention; N = 120 teenagers	To evaluate the effect of educational nutritional interventions on nutritional knowledge, attitudes and quality of diet	The application of a structuredput educational intervention consists of periodic meetings , educational materials, and practical activities.	Significant improvement was observed in knowledge nutritional, attitudes related to food healthy, increase
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Article	Author, year, location	Type of study and N	Objectives	Methodology	Key findings
				and assessments performed before and after the intervention	diet quality and greater adherence to recommendations nutritional
5	Andrade, L. R. <i>et al.</i> 2023 Brazil	Primary study (cross-sectional design). N = 465 teenagers from public schools (ages 10 to 17).	Assess the association between body image and anthropometric indicators and lifestyle in schoolchildren.	Collection of demographic information, Anthropometric and body image assessments (using silhouette scales) within the state school system.	A high prevalence of body image dissatisfaction was observed. It was concluded that the state anthropometric (overweight and abdominal obesity is an important outcome indicator negative aspects of body image in adolescents.
6	Miller <i>et al.</i> 2023 Australia	Qualitative study with intervention school; N = 68 teenagers	To assess alternative and participatory strategies of education nutritional applied to the school environment	Development educational interventions focused on active participation, problem solving discussions Collective and practical approach to healthy eating	Participatory strategies resulted in greater engagement from adolescents. increased engagement and improved receptiveness to educational initiatives related to nutrition.

7	Fonseca <i>et al.</i> 2023 Brazil	Cross-sectional study observational N=860 adolescents (10 to 19 years old)	Analyze the association between body image and self-esteem in adolescents from the state public school system Salvador-BA, identifying factors related to body dissatisfaction.	A cross-sectional study was conducted with adolescents from state public schools. Sociodemographic, anthropometric and information was collected. Applied instruments validated for assessing body image and self-esteem. The data were	A high prevalence of body image dissatisfaction was observed among adolescents, especially among those who are overweight. Low self-esteem showed itself associated with negative body image.
Article	Author, year, location	Type of study and N	Objectives	Methodology	Key findings
				submitted to statistical analysis to verify associations between the variables investigated.	The results show that physical and psychosocial factors significantly influence the construction of self-image in adolescence, reinforcing the need for educational and health promotion actions aimed at this population.

Source: prepared by the authors, 2026.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The seven studies that comprised this review presented varied methodological designs, with a predominance of descriptive and observational research, accompanied by qualitative investigations, comparative studies, and educational interventions carried out in the school context. This methodological diversity allowed for the analysis of the topic from different perspectives, broadening the understanding of the strategies used to promote healthy eating and prevent eating disorders among adolescents.

In general, studies converge in recognizing the school as a strategic space for the development of health promotion actions, highlighting the relevance of participatory methodologies, such as discussion circles, educational workshops, group dynamics, and practical activities, in contrast to exclusively expository approaches.

The differences observed between the studies were mainly related to the investigative focus adopted by each research, since some of the works concentrated on food and nutritional education and the construction of healthy habits, while others prioritized the analysis of the influence of social networks, body image, and risky eating behaviors in adolescence.

The predominance of participatory strategies is justified by the particularities of the adolescent audience, which tends to resist pre-prepared discourses and responds better when offered space to converse, experiment, and express opinions. The study conducted by Seccon *et al.* (2023), conducted with 35 students aged 15 to 18 from a public school, adopted an interdisciplinary approach that combined group discussions, workshops, and group activities as food and nutrition education initiatives. The authors observed that these activities broadened the students' knowledge about nutrition and promoted more conscious food choices.

A similar result was described by Silva ME R *et al.* (2024), who conducted practical workshops with 42 adolescents in a public school in Teresina (PI) and reported that , after the intervention, the young people began to try new foods and reflect on their own habits. The comparison between the two experiences suggests that activities of a practical nature, in which the adolescent assumes an active role, tend to produce greater awareness about lifestyle than strictly expository classes.

The results found by Silva ME R *et al.* (2024) also corroborate observations described by Barbosa *et al.* (2016), who highlight food and nutrition education as a tool capable of positively influencing the eating behavior of students. Although the study by Barbosa *et al.* (2016) is not included in the sample of this review because it does not meet the established time frame, its findings reinforce the importance of continuous educational actions for the consolidation of healthy eating habits in the school environment.

This same principle of direct involvement proves relevant when the discussion turns to eating disorders, a context in which the adolescent's willingness to talk about their own body is added. Batista *et al.* (2026), when developing an educational activity with 9th-grade and 1st-year high school students in a state school in Belo Horizonte, identified significant student involvement, especially in topics related to body aesthetics and mental health. The activity was mediated by undergraduate students in the health field, with material adapted to youth language,

and showed that adolescents have the repertoire to discuss the subject, even though they rarely find spaces for listening focused on these issues in their school routine.

Similarly, Silva ME R *et al.* (2024) developed food and nutrition education workshops with adolescents from the public school system, addressing topics such as healthy eating, food hygiene, full use of food, and waste prevention. The authors observed high student participation and highlighted that the educational activities contributed to expanding knowledge about healthy eating practices and stimulating reflection on daily food choices. The results show that interventions carried out in the school environment constitute important health promotion strategies, favoring the construction of more adequate eating habits and strengthening the role of the school as a space for education and prevention. The discussion about the standards that affect the body image of young people is inseparable from the time that this public currently dedicates to social networks. Rosa, Jamas -Pereira and Souza (2024) directly addressed this relationship in a study with 64 high school adolescents. Based on a questionnaire about media use, eating habits, and body image, they demonstrated that constant exposure to content focused on appearance interferes both with the quality of food and with how young people perceive their own bodies.

Santos *et al.* (2024), in a descriptive study with 78 adolescents from a public school, reached similar conclusions by identifying a clear association between the consumption of this type of digital content and increased body dissatisfaction, accompanied by inadequate eating behaviors. It is worth noting that Leal *et al.* (2013) had already pointed to body dissatisfaction as one of the main factors associated with risk behaviors for eating disorders in adolescence, indicating that the problem is not recent. What has changed is the intensity of exposure, now amplified by continuous access to content about appearance through mobile devices.

The results of Andrade *et al.* (2023), included in the sample of this review, reinforce this discussion by demonstrating a high prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among school adolescents. The authors identified a significant association between body dissatisfaction, overweight, and abdominal obesity, showing that anthropometric factors also exert an important influence on the body perception of young people. These findings suggest that the prevention of eating disorders should consider not only psychological and social aspects, but also factors related to nutritional status.

In a complementary manner, Fonseca *et al.* (2023) found a high prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among adolescents in the state public school system of Salvador, Bahia. The authors observed that low self-esteem was associated with negative body perception, demonstrating that emotional and psychosocial aspects play a relevant role in the construction

of self-image during adolescence. These results reinforce the need for educational interventions that simultaneously address healthy eating, self-esteem, and the appreciation of body diversity.

The three studies cited above (Rosa, Jamas -Pereira and Souza, 2024; Santos *et al.*, 2024; and Leal, Philippi and Polacow , 2013) were used in this discussion as complementary references to broaden the understanding of factors related to eating disorders in adolescence, although they do not comprise the final sample of this review. The studies by Rosa, Jamas -Pereira and Souza (2024) and Santos *et al.*, (2024) contributed to contextualizing the influence of social media on body image and eating behavior, but were not included among the selected articles because they did not specifically address the role of the nutritionist in the school environment, a criterion considered central to this review. Similarly, the study by Leal *et al.* , (2013) was used as complementary theoretical support, since it is outside the previously established time frame;

In line with these results, Bittar and Soares (2020) observed that frequent exposure to social media can contribute to the construction of negative body perceptions and the adoption of inadequate eating behaviors among adolescents. Although this study is not part of the final sample of this review due to the publication period, its findings complement recent evidence by highlighting the role of digital media in shaping body image during adolescence.

It is expected that schools will be better prepared to welcome adolescents, but the study by Padilha and Germani (2023) indicates that there is still a considerable way to go. Analyzing 56 public and private basic education schools in Brazil, the authors found that, although schools are recognized as privileged spaces for food and nutrition education actions, most of these activities occur sporadically, without continuity, and with reduced participation from nutritionists. This finding aligns with the discussion proposed by Vasconcelos and Calado (2011), who emphasize that nutritionists, even those trained to work in public health, do not effectively reach the school environment in most situations. Isolated actions, restricted to specific dates on the calendar, rarely modify habits consolidated at this stage of life, which helps explain why so many well-intentioned initiatives do not last over time.

Padilha and Germani (2023) and Vasconcelos and Calado (2011) were also used as complementary references. The former contributed to broadening the understanding of the organization of food and nutrition education actions in the Brazilian school environment, but was not included in the final sample because it was a scoping review, a design excluded by the defined methodological criteria. Vasconcelos and Calado (2011), in turn, was used for historical and professional contextualization of the nutritionist's role, but was not included among the

selected studies because it was outside the delimited publication period and did not correspond to a recent primary article.

Similar aspects were discussed by Silva Neto et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of the presence of a nutritionist in food and nutrition education actions developed in the school environment. Although the study was used only as a complementary reference, the authors reinforce that the work of this professional favors health promotion, the prevention of nutritional problems, and the strengthening of healthy eating habits among children and adolescents.

The findings of Raut 's studies *et al.* (2024), Miller *et al.* (2023), and Benavides *et al.* (2024) reinforce that structured, participatory, and/or digital educational interventions can promote positive changes in nutritional knowledge, eating attitudes, and adherence to healthy practices. The findings of the studies by Raut et al. (2024) and Miller et al. (2023) reinforce that structured and participatory educational interventions can promote positive changes in nutritional knowledge, eating attitudes, and adherence to healthy practices. Additionally, Benavides et al. (2021) was used as a complementary reference to broaden the discussion about the potential of digital technologies applied to health promotion among adolescents. Although it is not part of the final sample of this review because it falls outside the established time frame, its results contribute to contextualizing the use of digital interventions as a complementary strategy to educational actions developed in the school environment.

Raut *et al.* (2024), in a longitudinal intervention with school adolescents in Nepal, identified a significant improvement in nutritional knowledge, attitudes related to food, and diet quality after periodic educational activities. Miller *et al.* (2023), in an experience developed in Australia, highlighted that nutritional education strategies based on active participation, problem-solving, and collective discussion increase adolescent engagement and make the content more relevant to their reality. Benavides *et al.* (2024), when evaluating a digital intervention with 301 adolescents, observed improvements in eating habits and health knowledge, demonstrating that technological resources can complement face-to-face actions in the school environment. Taken together, these findings indicate that the effectiveness of the actions depends not only on the content covered, but also on how it is presented to adolescents.

Another recurring aspect among the studies is the finding that the results depend heavily on the nutritionist not acting in isolation. Seccon *et al.* (2023) attribute part of the students' positive response to the interdisciplinary nature of the activities developed, and Batista *et al.* (2026), by having undergraduate students from different health fields as mediators, reinforce this interpretation, since the articulation between different areas of knowledge broadened the



reach and acceptance of the activities by adolescents. In practice, this shows that the work gains strength when teachers, psychologists, nutritionists, and school administrators work in an articulated manner. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) follows the same perspective when defending the school as a strategic space for health promotion, provided that the actions are planned jointly and continuously. Keeping the nutritionist isolated, therefore, tends to diminish the function they could perform in this context.

It is important to acknowledge that the studies analyzed have limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Most of them, five out of seven studies, were conducted in a single school or in a specific region with a small number of participants, which restricts the generalization of the results to other Brazilian contexts. Some of the research is a report of experience, a condition that brings the investigation closer to daily practice, although it may compromise the methodological rigor observed in more controlled designs. In four of the seven studies, the role of the nutritionist is not directly addressed, even though the actions described are fully within their area of expertise, such as in the development of food and nutrition education activities. Therefore, there remains a need for research that describes more clearly how this professional works in the school environment and what the medium- and long-term effects of this work are.

The synthesis of findings from the seven selected articles shows that nutritionists have different avenues for involvement in the school environment. These include planning food education workshops, leading discussion groups on body image and self-esteem, early identification of adolescents who already show signs of risky eating behavior, working together with teachers and psychologists, and developing ongoing actions throughout the school year, not just one-off events restricted to commemorative dates.

Additionally, the methodological heterogeneity of the included studies, both in terms of design and instruments used, makes direct comparisons between findings difficult, representing a further limitation of this review.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of the selected studies, it was possible to identify that the role of this professional goes beyond the exclusively nutritional dimension, assuming a relevant role in health promotion, health education, the development of healthier eating habits, and the prevention of risk factors associated with eating disorders.



The results showed that interventions based on participatory methodologies, including educational workshops, discussion groups, practical activities, group dynamics, and strategies contextualized to the reality of young people, have greater potential to promote behavioral changes when compared to strictly expository approaches. These strategies demonstrated not only increased nutritional knowledge but also the development of food autonomy, critical reflection on body image, and the ability of adolescents to recognize inadequate eating behaviors and factors associated with nutritional risk.

Another relevant aspect identified refers to the recognition of the school environment as a privileged space for interventions aimed at promoting health. The school constitutes a strategic environment because it concentrates individuals in the phase of habit formation, identity construction, psychosocial development, and consolidation of behaviors that may persist into adulthood. Therefore, the school context presents significant potential for the implementation of preventive actions, especially when these are developed in a continuous, planned, and integrated manner with pedagogical activities and institutional health policies.

This review identified important limitations related to the consolidation of these practices in the educational setting. It was observed that a large part of the interventions described occur in a one-off manner, frequently associated with specific campaigns or isolated actions, hindering the continuity of educational strategies and reducing the potential for longitudinal impact of these initiatives. Furthermore, it was found that the effective presence of nutritionists in the school environment remains limited, both due to the insufficient number of professionals in this context and the absence of policies that strengthen their continuous and integrated role within multidisciplinary teams.

The growing influence of social media, constant exposure to idealized aesthetic standards, and the behavioral transformations typical of adolescence have also emerged as important factors in understanding the vulnerability of this group. The studies analyzed suggest that the association between body image, eating behavior, and consumption of digital content increases the need for early preventive interventions capable of promoting not only nutritional knowledge, but also critical thinking, self-esteem, and skills related to emotional and nutritional health.

Additionally, it was observed that the best results tend to occur when the nutritionist's work is interdisciplinary, involving teachers, psychologists, school administrators, families, and other health professionals. This collaboration broadens the reach of educational actions, strengthens preventive strategies, and enables more comprehensive interventions given the complexity of factors influencing eating behavior in adolescence.

Although the results found point to relevant evidence, this review has limitations that should be considered. The methodological heterogeneity of the included studies, the reduced number of research studies that directly address the role of the nutritionist, and the predominance of investigations carried out in specific contexts limit the generalization of the findings.

It can be concluded, therefore, that the nutritionist occupies a strategic position in the school environment, not only as a professional responsible for food and nutritional education, but also as an agent promoting health, prevention, and early identification of risky eating behaviors. Thus, strengthening their presence in educational institutions represents a relevant measure to expand preventive actions, promote healthy habits, and contribute to reducing the impacts associated with eating disorders among adolescents.

Finally, further research is recommended to investigate, in greater depth, the medium- and long-term impacts of nutritionists' work, as well as studies that evaluate different models for the inclusion of this professional in the school environment, contributing to the strengthening of scientific evidence and the formulation of more effective strategies for promoting health in adolescence.

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