

# Food and Nutrition Education and Policy in Japan



Yukari Takemi, Ph.D. RD  
Professor, Nutrition Ecology,  
Graduate School of Nutrition Sciences  
Kagawa Nutrition University, Saitama, Japan



# Outline of presentation

- Overview of food and nutrition policies in Japan

Three main policies:

- School lunch program by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science & Technology (MEXT) based on School Lunch Program Act
- Food and nutrition education (Shokuiku in Japanese) promotion by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) created by the Basic Act on Shokuiku
- Health promotion policy named “Healthy Japan 21” by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) based on Health Promotion Act

# Food and Nutrition Policies/Programs of Ministries in Japan

- ❑ Health and Nutrition promotion
- ❑ Nutrition Research, Monitoring
- ❑ Nutrient Intake Standards, Dietary Guidelines
- ❑ Education and training for Dietitians

**Ministry of Health,  
Labour and Welfare  
(MHLW)**

- ❑ School Lunch Program
- ❑ Nutrition education for Children: Shokuiku

**Ministry of Education, Culture,  
Sports, Science & Technology**

- ❑ Food production/Food supply
- ❑ Promotion of “Washoku: Traditional Japanese food culture”
- ❑ Shokuiku Promotion  
(Food and Nutrition Education)

**Ministry of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Fisheries**

- ❑ Nutrition Labelling
- ❑ Foods for Special Dietary Uses
- ❑ Foods with health claims

**Consumer Affairs Agency**

# School lunch program

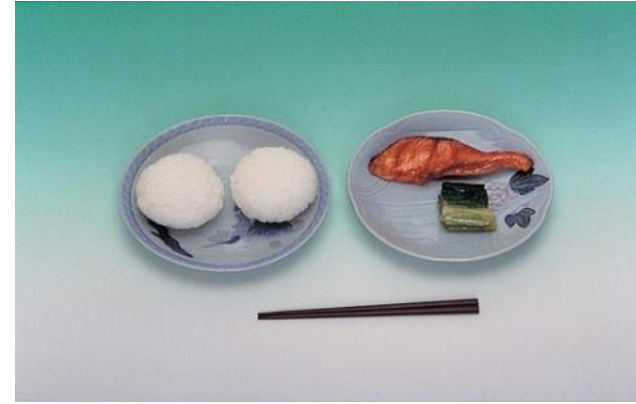
Information about school lunch in English:  
Special Issue on School Meal Programs in Japan and Selected  
Countries. Jpn. J. Nutr. Diet., Vol.76 Supplement.

[https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/eiyogakuzashi/76/Supplement/\\_contents/-char/ja](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/eiyogakuzashi/76/Supplement/_contents/-char/ja)

# History of School Lunch Program

1889

Free school lunches were first served to children from low-income families



1945-1947

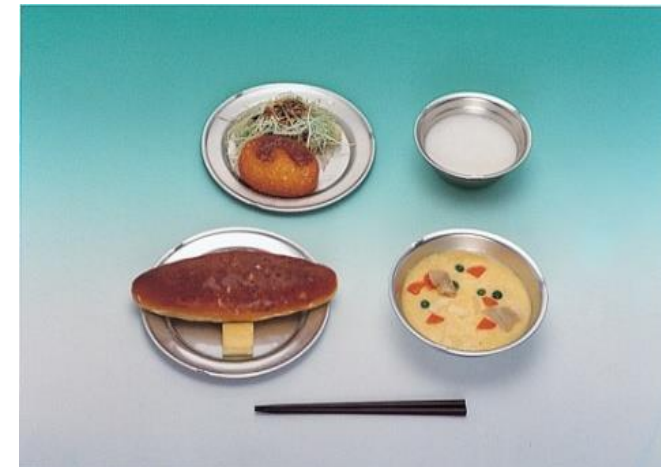
After the second world war, the Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture recommended school lunch. It was supported by LARA (Licensed Agency for Relief in Asia) and UNICEF United Nation's International Children Energy Fund)

1954

[School Lunch Act](#) was established

2008

The School Lunch Act was revised to change the focus from "improving dietary habits" to "promoting food and nutrition education."

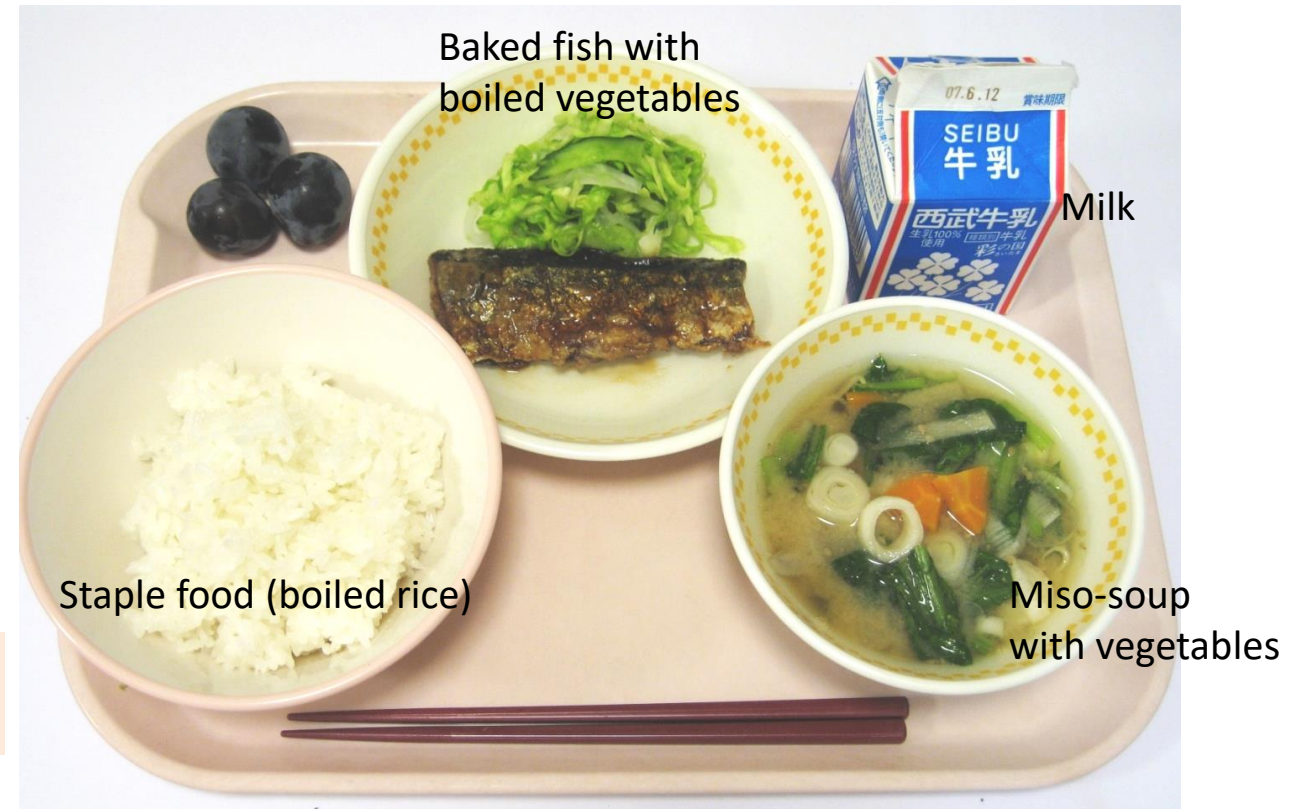




School lunch coverage was 98.5% at primary schools, 86.6% at secondary schools (in fiscal year of 2018.)



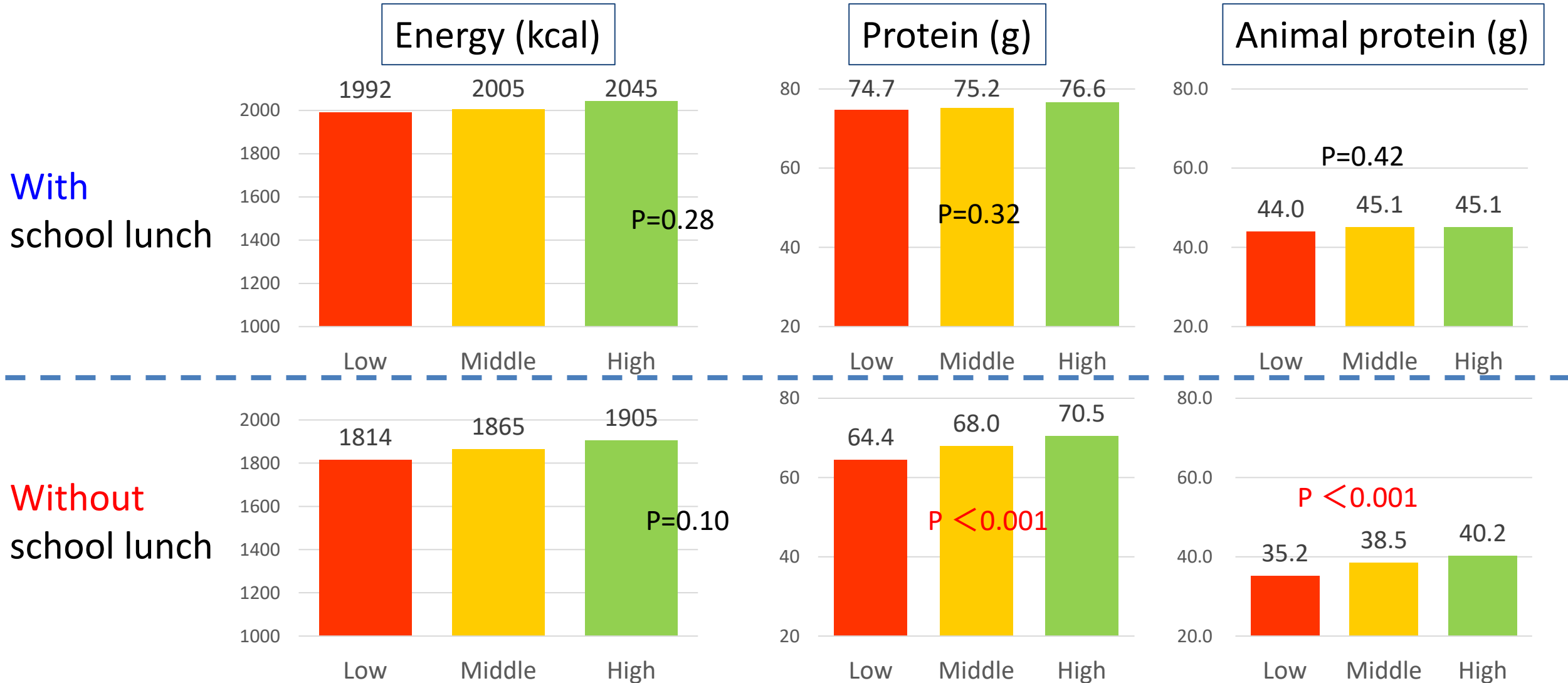
Source: MHLW. Nutrition Policy in Japan to Leave No One Behind.  
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000847743.pdf>



- The Nutritional Standards of School Lunches by MEXT based on the School Lunch Act
- The dietary pattern of school lunches: full meal pattern consisting of staple food, accompanying dishes, and milk
- The Nutritional Standards were set to higher standard values than one-third of the daily energy requirement and one-third or more of the daily nutrient intake

Association between household income and nutrient intake were not significant on days **with school lunches**, but were **significant on days without school lunch**.

836 5<sup>th</sup> grade children (10-11 years),  
Analysis from 4 days dietary records



# Nutrition Teacher

Nutrition teacher system was started in 2005

- Purpose
  - Increase children's healthy diet skills and improve dietary habits
- Responsibility
  - Education
    - Classes in school curriculum
    - Nutritional counseling for high-risk children with obesity, food allergy, etc.
    - Education for family and community
  - Food service management
    - Nutrition management, Hygiene control, Food control



栄養教諭による食に関する指導

**School lunch has a role as a teaching material!**



# National Shokuiku Promotion

# The Basic Act on Shokuiku

The Basic Act on **Shokuiku (food and nutrition education)** was enacted in 2005.

Shokuiku is the basis of life and the foundation of intellectual, education and physical education.

It aims to foster people who can put into practice healthy eating habits by providing them with various experience opportunities where they can acquire knowledge about “food and nutrition” and an ability to choose appropriately what they eat.



Source: MAFF. Current Dietary Situation in Japan and Promotion of Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education), 2019.

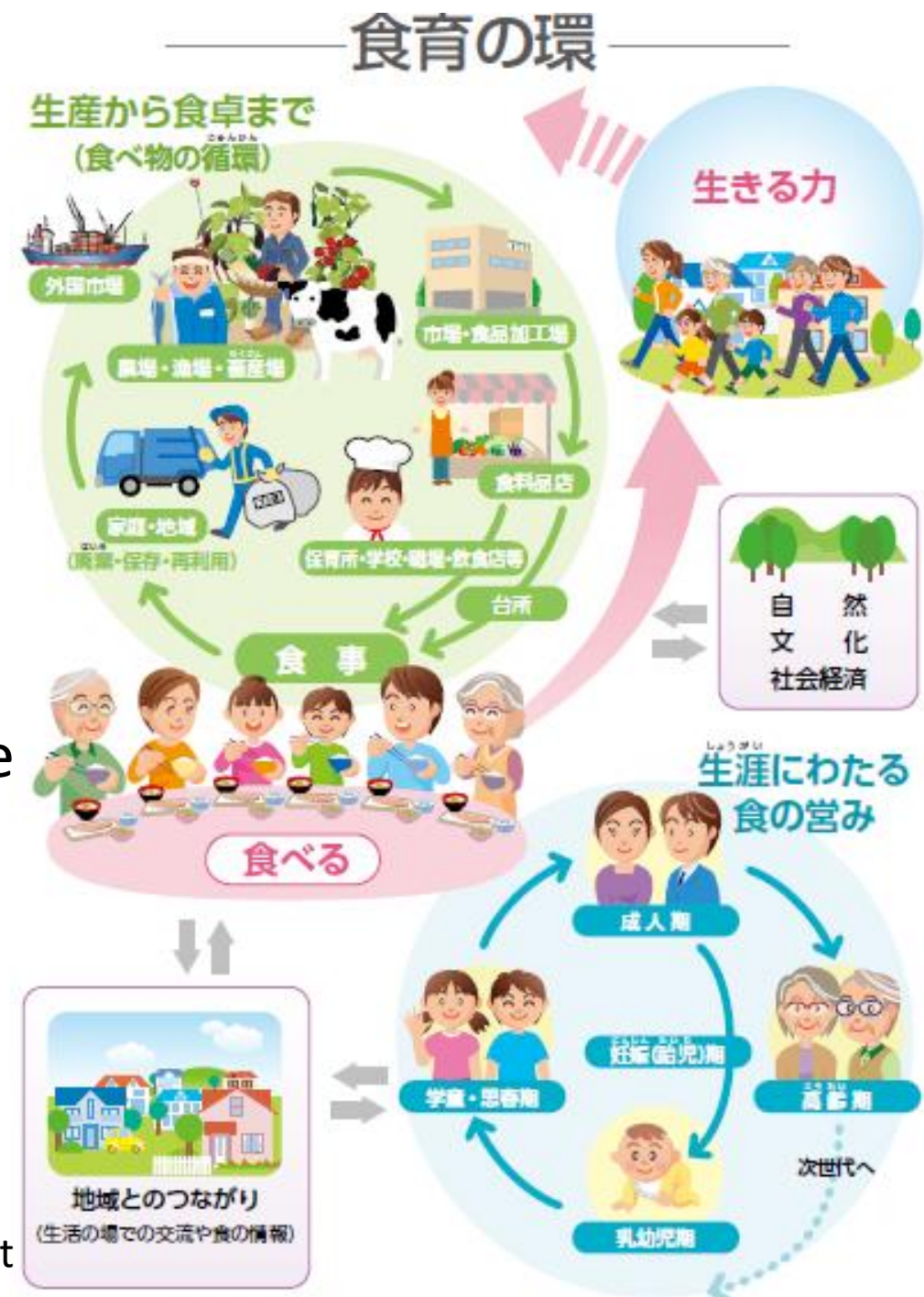
[https://www.maff.go.jp/j/syokuiku/pdf/all\\_en.pdf](https://www.maff.go.jp/j/syokuiku/pdf/all_en.pdf)

Every five years,  
the government publishes a  
national Shokuiku promotion plan

Shokuiku promotion focuses on:

- ✓ Healthy dietary habits based on the dietary guidelines and food guide
- ✓ Comprehensive understanding of food systems through agricultural experience
- ✓ Promotion of local production for local consumption
- ✓ Inheritance of food culture

Shokuiku Guidebook  
developed by the Cabinet

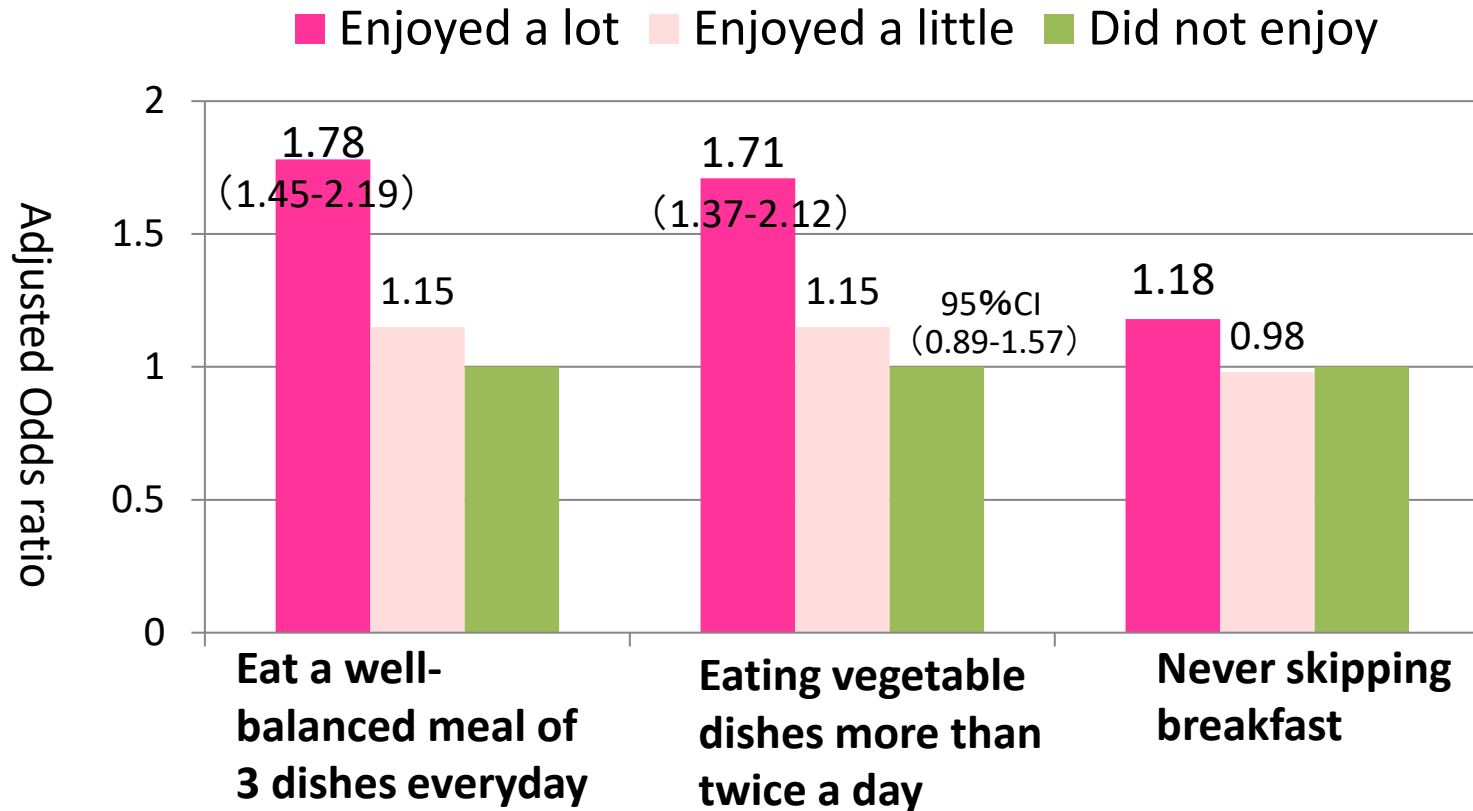


# Japanese Dietary Guidelines

March 2000, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; partially revised in June 2016.

1. **Enjoy your meals.**
2. **Establish a healthy rhythm by having meals regularly, including breakfast**
3. **Keep a healthy body weight and balance the calories you eat with physical activity.**
4. **Eat well-balanced meals which include a grain dish, as well as fish & meat dishes (main dish) and vegetable dishes (side dishes).**
5. **Eat appropriate amounts of grains such as rice and other cereals.**
6. **Combine vegetables, fruits, milk products, beans and fish in your diet.**
7. **Reduce salt and intake adequate quality and amounts of fat.**
8. **Take advantage of your dietary culture and local food products, while incorporating new and different dishes.**
9. **Reduce leftovers and waste through proper cooking and storage methods.**
10. **Be more conscious of your dietary habits, review your dietary habits.**

# Enjoyable eating experiences in childhood were positively associated with a balanced diet in adulthood



\* : Adjusted by sex, marital status, family member, work, economical status, area.  $p < 0.01$



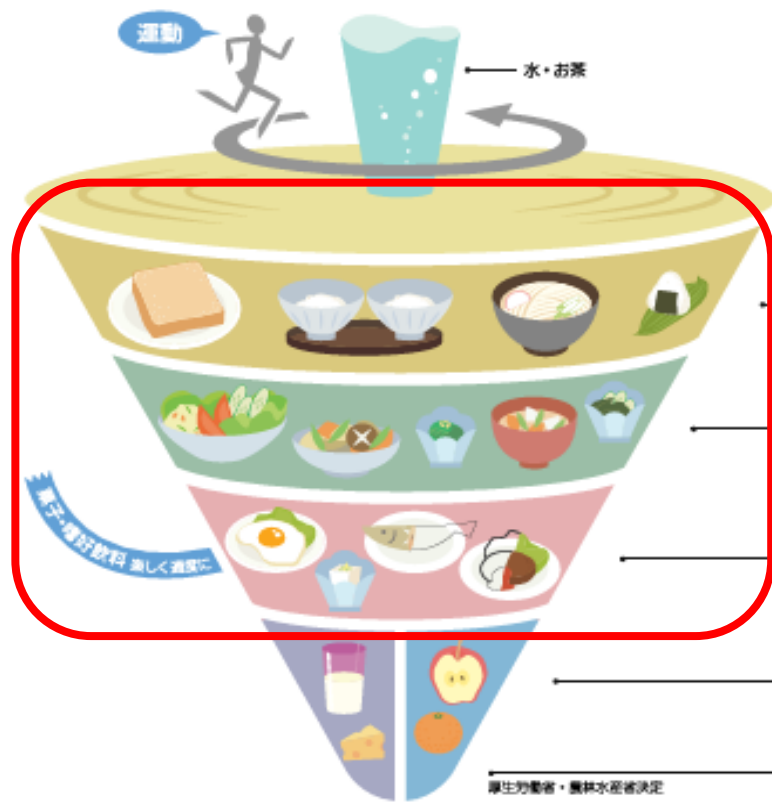
# Japanese Dietary Guidelines 2016

Eat **well-balanced meals** with **grain dish (Shushoku)**, as well as **fish & meat dishes (Shusai)** and **vegetable dishes (Fukusai)**.



# Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top

(2005, by MHLW and MAFF)



## 食事バランスガイド

あなたの食事は大丈夫？

1日分	料理例
<b>5-7</b> 主食(ごはん、パン、麺) つ(8%) ごはん中盛りだったら4杯程度	1つ分 = ごはんの盛り1杯、おにぎり1個、食パン1枚、ローソクパン1個 1.5つ分 = ごはん中盛り1杯、うどん1杯、もりそば1杯、スパゲッティ
<b>5-6</b> 副菜(野菜、きのこ、いも、海藻料理) つ(8%) 野菜料理5皿程度	1つ分 = 野菜サラダ、きゅうりなどの冷たい野菜、煮たごぼう、ほうろく等の汁物、ひじきの煮物、煮豆、きのこソテー 2つ分 = 野菜の揚げ物、野菜炒め、芋の煮っころがし
<b>3-5</b> 主菜(肉、魚、卵、大豆料理) つ(8%) 肉・魚・卵・大豆料理から3皿程度	1つ分 = 煮豚、納豆、目玉焼き1個、焼き魚、煮たまご、まぐろの刺身 2つ分 = 焼き魚、煮たまご、まぐろの刺身 3つ分 = ハンバーガーステーキ、鶏肉のしょうゆ焼き、鶏肉のから揚げ
<b>2</b> 牛乳・乳製品 つ(8%) 牛乳だったら1本程度	1つ分 = 牛乳コップ半分、ヨーグルト、アイスヨーグルト、ヨーグルトドリンク 2つ分 = 牛乳瓶1本分
<b>2</b> 果物 つ(8%) みかんだったら2個程度	1つ分 = みかん1個、りんご半分、かき1個、梨半分、ぶどう半房、葡萄1房

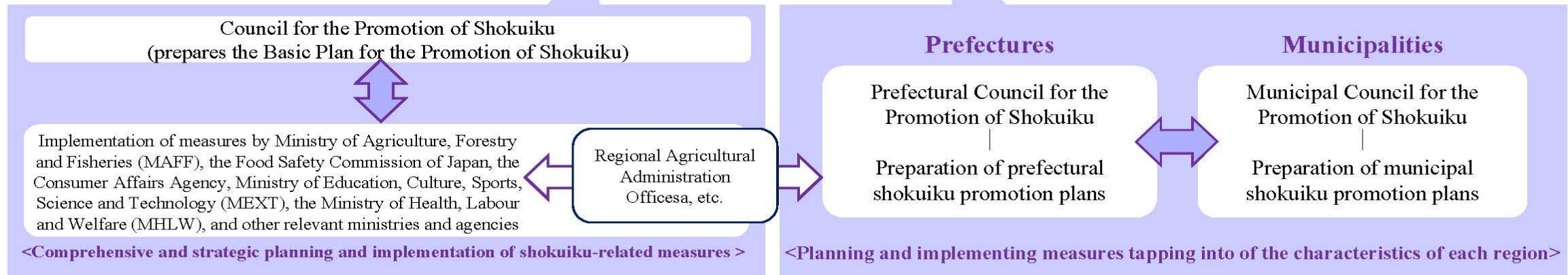
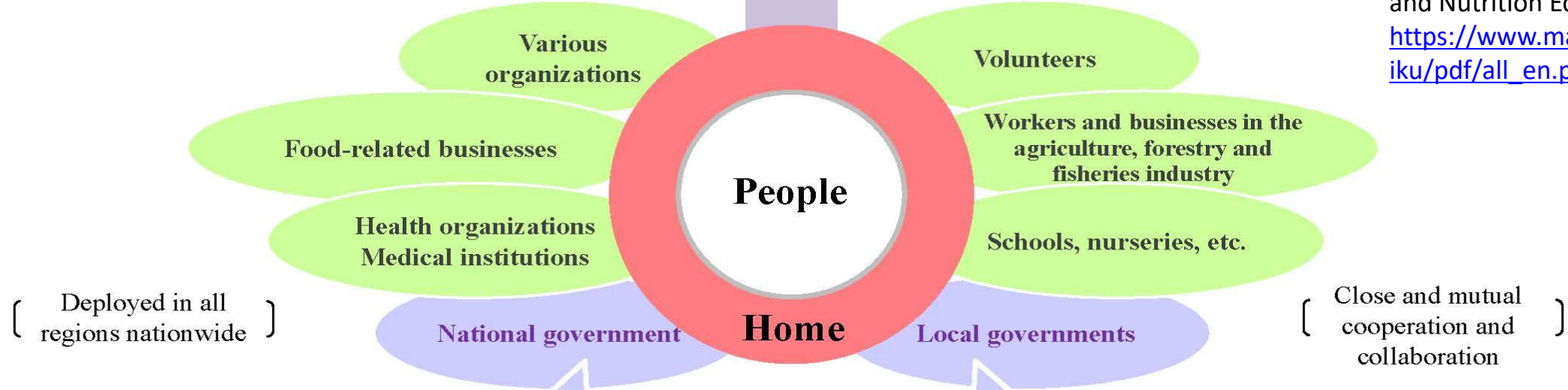
※8%とはサービング(食事の提供量の単位)の略

# Schemes for Promoting Shokuiku

Improve people's health and well-being

Promote shokuiku as a national campaign

Source: MAFF. Current Dietary Situation in Japan and Promotion of Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education), 2019.  
[https://www.maff.go.jp/j/syokuiku/pdf/all\\_en.pdf](https://www.maff.go.jp/j/syokuiku/pdf/all_en.pdf)



# The Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Shokuiku: 2021–2025

Three basic policy:

1. From the **health perspective**;

Promotion of Shokuiku that supports physical and mental health throughout the life cycle

2. From the **social, environmental, and cultural perspective**;

Promotion of shokuiku that supports sustainable food system

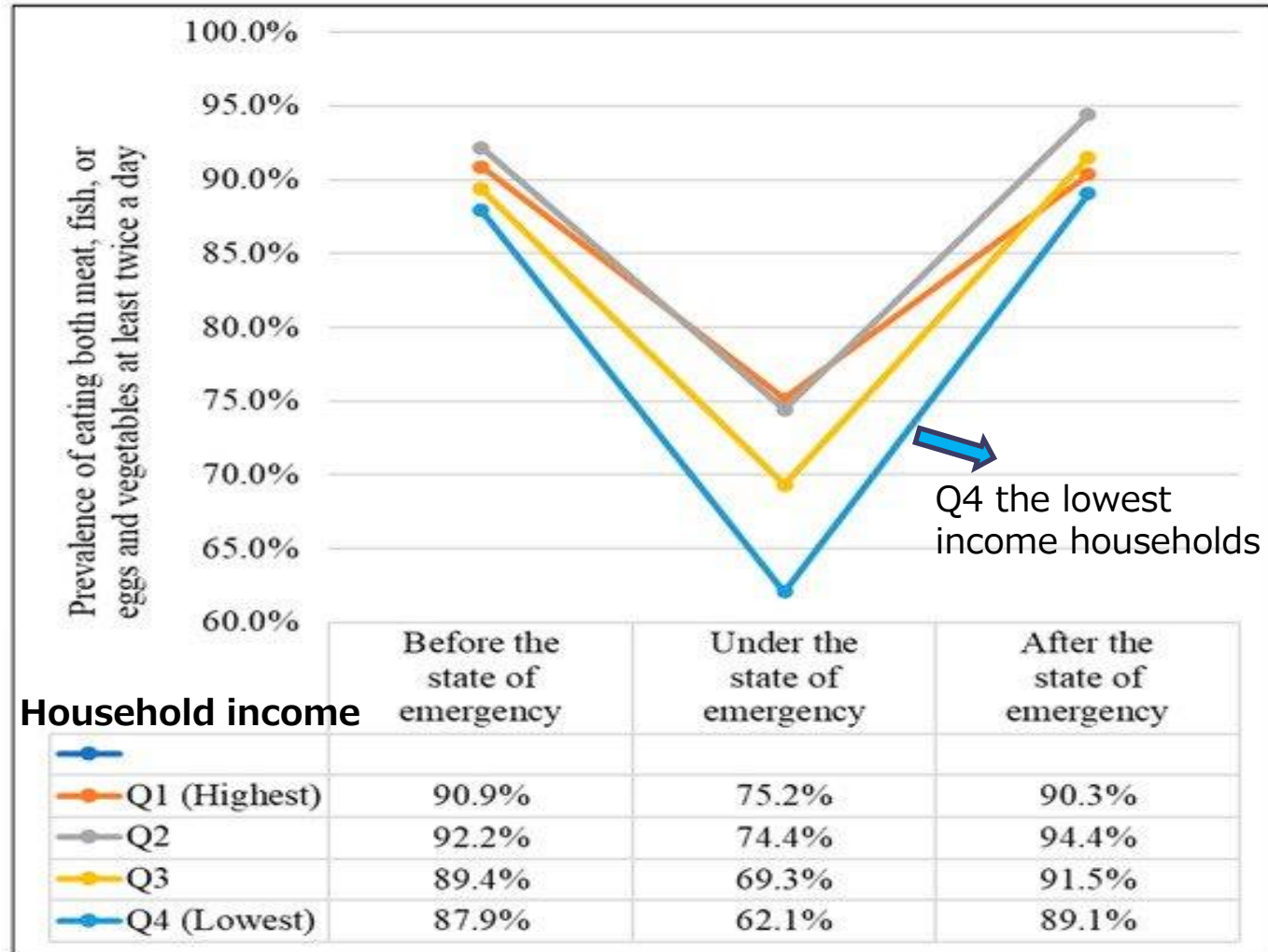
3. From the **comprehensive perspective**;

Promotion of Shokuiku for new normal way of living and digitalization with/after COVID-19

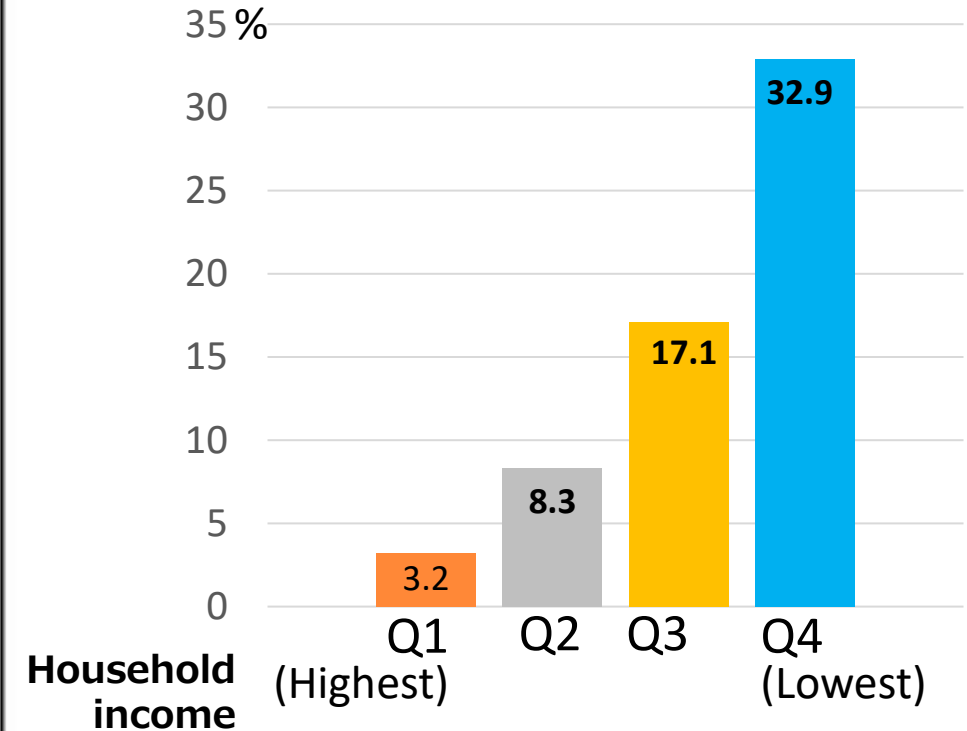


# Schoolchildren’s quality of meals worsened during the COVID-19 state of emergency especially in low-income households. (1,111 children, 10–14 years old)

“Well-balanced dietary intake” was defined as the intake of protein foods (meat, fish, or eggs) and vegetables.



The guardians who answered “I have a lesser financial position for choosing or consuming foods and meals” after COVID-19 state of emergency.



Horikawa C, Murayama N et al. Nutrients 2021; 13: 2743.

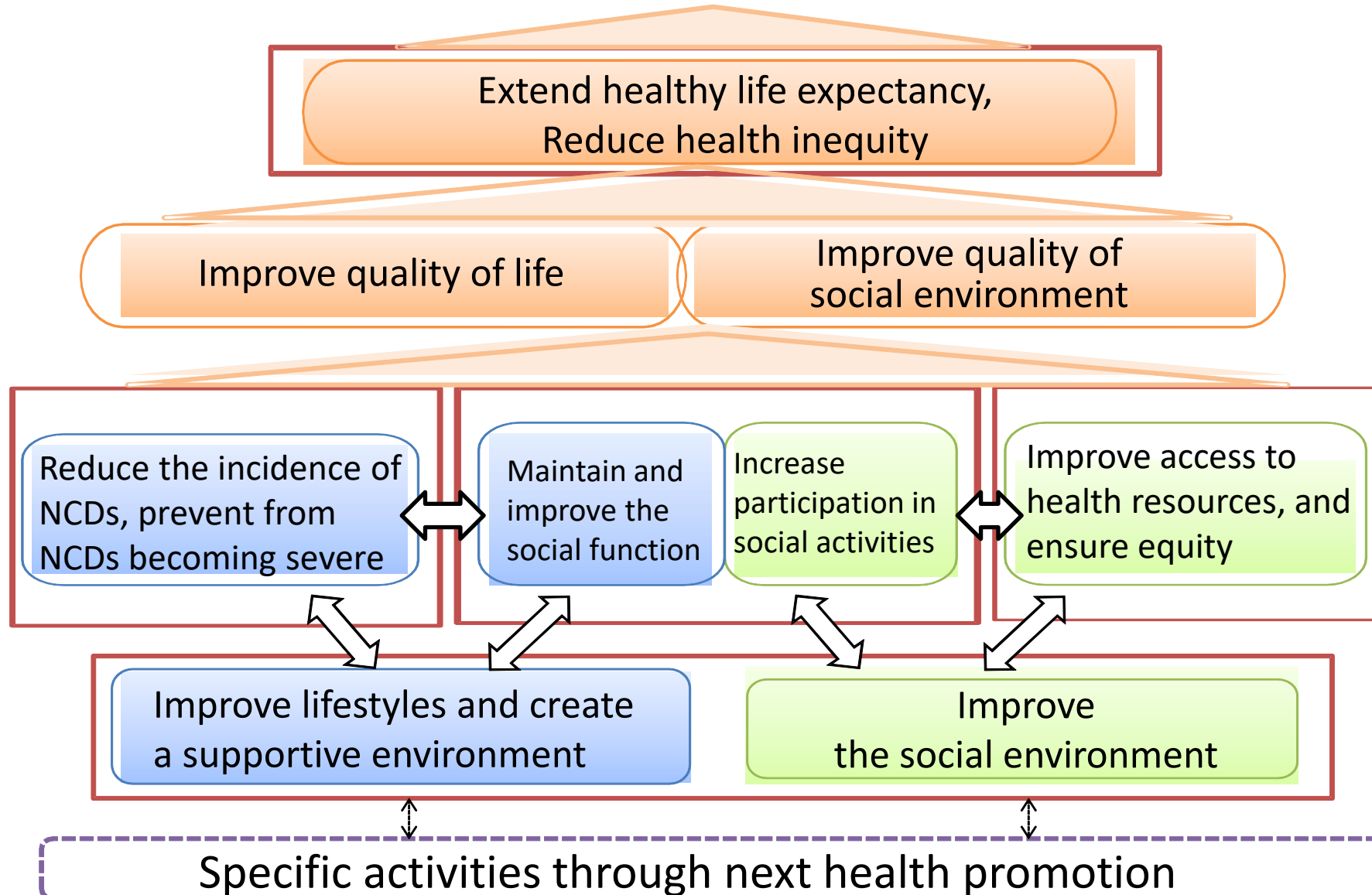


# National Health Promotion plan named Health Japan 21

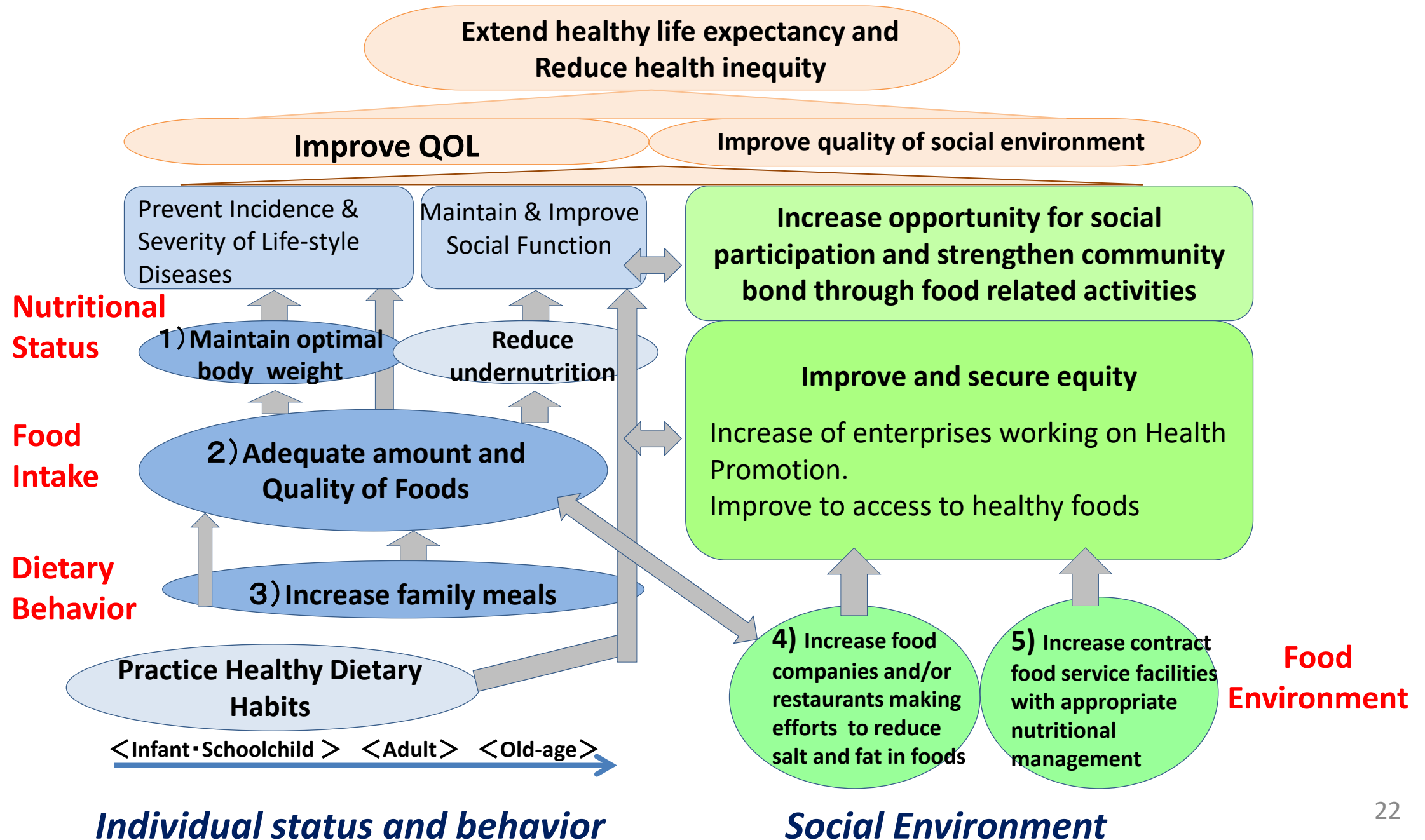
based on Health Promotion Act

# Health Promotion Action: Health Japan 21 (2<sup>nd</sup> phase)

Achieve an active society where everyone helps each other and lives healthily



# Framework of target setting in the Area of Nutrition and Diet

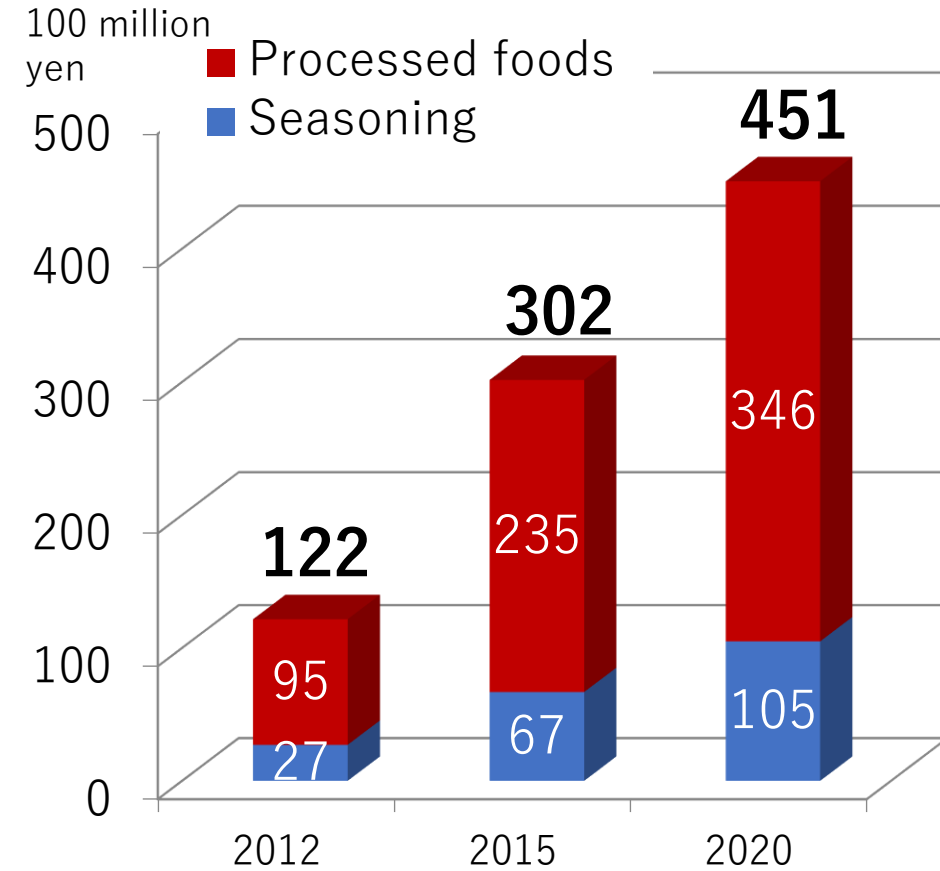


# Industry-Academia Collaboration: Case 1

The Japanese Society of Hypertension (JSH) recognizes reduced salt products.  
 Many food companies voluntarily and actively develop tasty foods lower in salt.



## Sales growth



Source: [https://www.jpnsj.jp/data/salt\\_foodlist\\_sales.pdf](https://www.jpnsj.jp/data/salt_foodlist_sales.pdf)

Pictures provided by Mr. Yoshihiro Nomura

# Academia-Industry Collaboration: Case 2

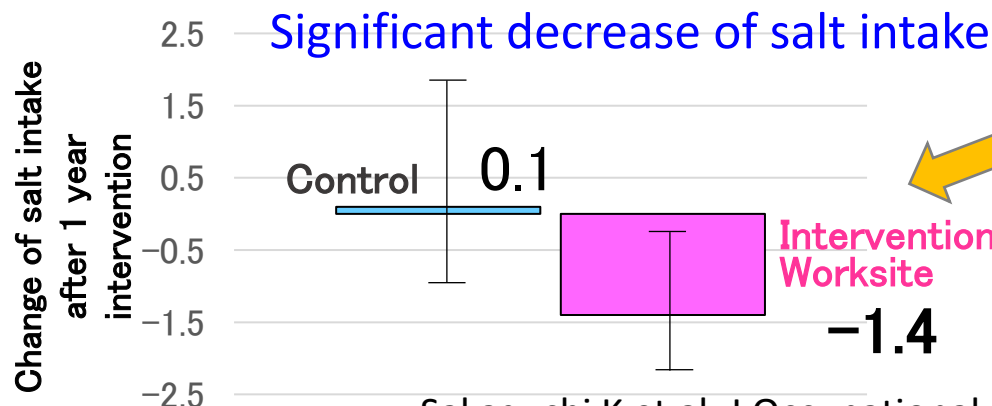
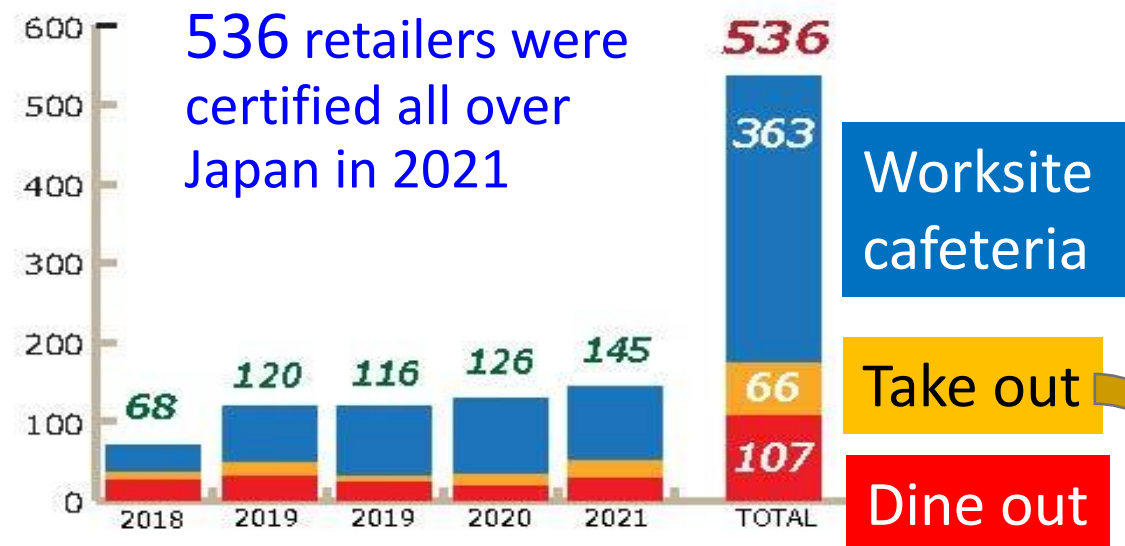


A new certification system for healthy meals and food environments was started in 2018. <http://smartmeal.jp/>

[https://smartmeal.jp/\\_src/121671/index-1s.pdf?v=1634613275683](https://smartmeal.jp/_src/121671/index-1s.pdf?v=1634613275683)

The Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics (JSND) developed a new certification system for food retailers, restaurants, and worksite cafeterias which continually provide well-balanced meals for customers in a healthy environment, such as a smoke-free environment.

A consortium consisting of 13 academic bodies including JSH judge and certify the retailers.





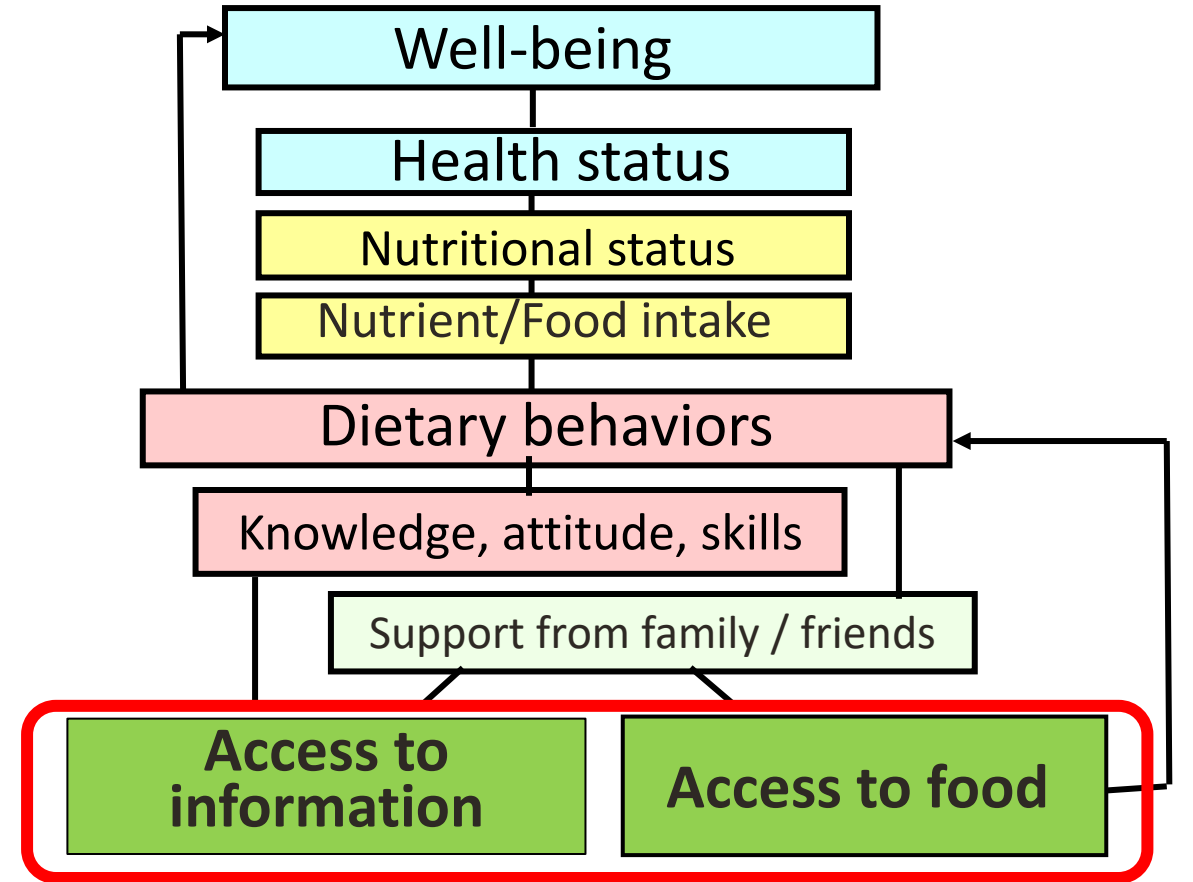
# Japan's new initiative for healthy and sustainable food environment

In 2021, The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) convened a committee to discuss how **multisector collaboration between the private sector, academia and government** could effectively promote **a healthy and sustainable food environment**, in collaboration with the relevant ministries and agencies\*.

\*Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries;  
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry;  
Ministry of Environment; Consumer Affairs Agency.

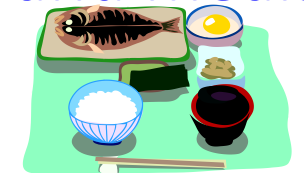
- Encourage business sector to provide healthier foods at affordable prices.
- For sustainable food environment, not only the **nutritional aspects**, but also the **environmental aspects** are important.

Framework of nutrition and diet area, the Healthy Japan 21 (1<sup>st</sup> Phase), modified



**Food environment**

“Food” means all the forms of food items, dishes, and meals.



# Conclusion

## Shokuiku (food and nutrition education) in Japan

- Implement in accordance with law and legal system
- Implement across ministries and agencies
- Involve various stakeholder in the community
- Implement from comprehensive perspective, such as health, food system, environment, and food culture, etc.
- Recently, focus on support for the vulnerable population



From the brochure of the  
3<sup>rd</sup> National Shokuiku Plan.