

# Deliverable D7.2:

## Report: Cross-country study with new parents, perceived changes of behaviour during transition to parenthood

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### BACKGROUND

The goal of this report is to contribute with new insights to the question of how impactful the transition to parenthood is for the food life course and how this period might influence eating behaviour change in terms of healthiness. Such knowledge is crucial to find effective nutrition intervention strategies to address behaviour change towards a more healthful and environmentally sustainable food consumption among families.

### KEY FINDINGS

There were marked differences in dietary changes according to the different stages in the transition: 1)pregnancy, 2)first months with the baby, 3)complementary feeding and 4)child shares family meals. **Danish** parents depicted early parenthood as a downturn in healthy eating, especially during phases 2 and 4; including *decreased* cooking enjoyment, dietary diversity and *increased* sugar consumption. The few positive influences of parenthood were increased food ethics' concerns and having breakfast every day. Conversely, **French** informants observed that parenthood was a window of opportunity for healthier eating, mainly during phases 1 and 4; including *decreased* meat (red meat and poultry), *decreased* high processed foods and sugar consumption; and *increased* dietary diversity and cooking enjoyment.

The cross-cultural analysis point to heterogeneous perspectives of the impact of parenthood on food behaviours and to an **equalizing effect** of becoming a parent in dietary healthiness, triggering “unhealthy” eaters to consider dietary improvements, while imposing challenges to “healthy” eaters to maintain their satisfactory food habits. Cultural and social factors, such as the **country food culture** and **parenting style** and **social support** with childcare explained cross-country differences.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The transition to parenthood represents a turning point for eating behaviour change and an opportunity for dietary interventions. Those strategies should focus on empowering parents to overcome the challenges of early parenthood in order to change eating patterns favourably; including individualized care and attention to negative emotions, stress and perceived time pressure.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Moura, A. F., & Aschemann-Witzel, J. (2020). A downturn or a window of opportunity? How Danish and French parents perceive changes in healthy eating in the transition to parenthood. *Appetite*, *150*, 104658.