

Post Graduate Education Course:

Behavioral and Lifestyle Determinants of Health, 1-2 ETCS

Aim of the Course

The aim of the course is to familiarize with the multitude of the ways in Behavioral and Lifestyle Determinants of Health. The course will explore the complex interplay between psychological, social and cultural determinants of health-related behaviors, and examine evidence-based strategies for promoting healthier lifestyles, particularly inspection of futures research. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to critically analyze behavioral health evidence and contribute to public health initiatives.

Time

Spring 2026 (please see pages 3 and 4). The lectures will be held during three morning sessions (4 lecture hours) on April 17, April 24, and May 22. Additional time is given to carry out the course work in Moodle.

Credits

The course equals 2 ETCS (1 ETCS from lectures and learning diary; 1 ETCS from the coursework). UTU provides a certificate of completed study course.

Target Groups

PhD researchers particularly in the fields of nutrition, food sciences, medicine and specializing medical doctor, and also other fields at the University of Turku including psychology and commercial and technical fields. The course is available for postgraduate students from UTU, and also from other Finnish universities.

Study Material

Named scientific articles.

Study Platform

Lectures at the University of Turku in the Medisiina building (also streamed), Moodle (learning diary, course work).

Implementation of the Course

- Streamed lectures, learning diary in which references to the named articles (available in Moodle) is made. (1 ETCS)
- Course work. Students will familiarize with scientific literature and write up a report to develop their scientific thinking about the subject of the course. The students will be given specific topics from which they will choose one. The students will conduct a focused literature search using library research databases to further develop practical and systemic research skills. They will use the literature to write up a concise report which will be shared with other students. Students will read each other's reports and give feedback to minimum of two other reports to develop scientific written communication skills. (1 ETCS)

Responsible Teachers

Kirsi Laitinen, kirsi.laitinen@utu.fi

Hanna Lagström, hanna.lagstrom@utu.fi

Course Marking

Pass (Presence in lectures and learning diary, 1 ETCS + Course work, 1 ETCS) / Fail

Registration

Please register for the course in the Eve system **by April 2, 2026**: <https://eve.utu.fi/event/82/>. Registered participants will receive further information about the course by email.

Lecture Sessions

The lectures take place at the University of Turku in the Medisiina D Building (Kiinamyllynkatu 10, Turku), in a room called Aistikattila. The lectures are also streamed.

Friday, 17 April, 2026 (Aistikattila/online) at 9:00-12:30

9:00-9:45

1. Introduction to Behavior, Lifestyles, and Health

Hanna Lagström, Kirsi Laitinen, UTU

- Teaching practices
- Introduction based on the preliminary assignment (Discussion: What is behavior, lifestyle, health?)

9:45-12:15, incl. 15 min break

2. Eating Behavior and Its Determinants and Eating Behavior in Relation to Obesity

Leila Karhunen, UEF

- This section introduces the different dimensions of eating behavior, as well as the biological, psychological, and social factors that regulate eating and eating behavior. It also examines how these factors can be studied and how they are related to weight management and obesity

12:15-12:30

3. Discussion & Practicalities

Friday, 24 April, 2026 (Aistikattila/online) at 9:00-12:30

One-hour presentations including discussion and 15 min breaks between presentations

9:00-10:00

1. Psychological Perspectives on Lifestyles Behavior

Tuomo Häikiö, UTU

- Motivation, self-regulation, and decision-making
- Habits and behavioral change

10:15-11:15

2. From Sensory Experience to Food Choice: Interactions with Knowledge, Values and Beliefs

Anu Hopia, Oskar Laaksonen and Nora Logrén, UTU

- The role of the senses (taste, smell, sight, hearing, touch) in behavior
- The influence of the senses on eating and other lifestyle habits

11:30-12:30

3. Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Aki Koponen, UTU

- Understanding consumer decisions: motivations, trade-offs, and routines in everyday choices
- Context matters: social influence, culture, and practices shaping behavior
- Communicating for change: health literacy, message framing, and responsible influence

Friday, 22 May, 2026 (Aistikattila/online) at 9:00-12:30

9:00-9:30

1. Ethical Perspectives on Food and Eating Behavior

Helena Siipi, UTU

- Four ethical principles
- Autonomy, paternalism and nudging food choices

9:30-10:00

2. The role of Technology and Digitalization in Food Behavior Research

Tuomas Mäkilä, UTU

- Digital tools in the Flavoria® Research Platform
- Food behavior data pipelines

10:15-12:15

3. Workshop: Future of Health and Eating

Riikka Saarimaa, Anna Kirveennummi, UTU

- The workshop consists of thematic working sessions where participants explore key topics and develop future images related to health and eating. The workshop concludes with a joint discussion and conclusion session, involving lecturers and facilitators.

12:15-12:30

4. Discussion & Practicalities

Hanna Lagström, Kirsi Laitinen