



Addressing Nutrition



CDC's Division of Adolescent & School Health

Mission

The mission of the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) is to prevent the most serious health risks among children, adolescents, and young adults.

Goal

To support the development of lifelong healthy eating habits among young people.

Strategies

- 1 Data collection and analysis.
- 2 Science-based guidance.
- 3 Funding to state departments of education and health and national nongovernmental organizations for program and policy development.
- 4 Evaluation.
- 5 Integration with other federal efforts.

1 Data Collection and Analysis

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

The YRBSS consists of national, state, and large urban school district surveys of representative samples of high school students. Conducted every two years, these surveys monitor health-risk behaviors among young people so that health and education agencies can more effectively target and improve programs. These behaviors, often established during childhood and early adolescence, include tobacco use; unhealthy dietary choices; inadequate physical activity; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that can lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, including HIV infection; and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence.

Specific data related to nutrition include

- Consumption of milk, fruits, vegetables, and soft drinks.
- Weight-control behaviors.
- Self-reported height and weight.

www.cdc.gov/YRBS

School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS)

Conducted every six years, SHPPS is the most comprehensive study of U.S. school health policies and programs. SHPPS assesses the characteristics of school health policies and programs at the state, district, school, and classroom levels nationwide across all eight school health program components: health education; physical education and activity; health services; mental health and social services; nutrition services; healthy and safe school

Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP)

A CSHP consists of eight interrelated components: health education; physical education; health services; nutrition services; counseling, psychological, and social services; healthy and safe school environments; health promotion for staff members; and family and community involvement. CSHPs focus on improving the quality of each of these components and expanding collaboration among the people responsible for them. This coordination results in a planned, organized, and comprehensive set of courses, services, policies, and interventions that meet the health and safety needs of all students from kindergarten through grade 12. Effective CSHPs can increase the adoption of health-enhancing behaviors, improve student and staff health, and use resources more efficiently.

environment; faculty and staff health promotion; and family and community involvement.

SHPPS monitors nutrition-related policies and practices, such as

- Requiring education on nutrition and dietary behavior.
- Providing healthy food and beverage options at schools and school events.
- Restricting less healthy options (e.g., offering only low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice, or water; placing time restrictions on access to vending machines; baking versus frying food).
- Requiring specific qualifications and training for nutrition services personnel.

www.cdc.gov/SHPPS



School Health Profiles (Profiles)

Profiles, a biennial survey conducted by state and local education and health agencies, provides data on school health policies and practices in states and large urban school districts. It monitors and assesses characteristics of, and trends in, health and physical education and activity, tobacco-use prevention policies, nutrition-related policies and practices, health services, collaboration, and family and community involvement in school health programs. States and large urban school districts can use Profiles data to plan and allocate resources, guide professional development, advocate for policy improvement and resources, and describe the status of school health programs in their jurisdictions.

Data collected in Profiles include the percentages of schools in participating states and large urban school districts that

- Include teaching nutrition and dietary behavior topics in required courses (e.g., the benefits of healthy eating, using food labels, behaviors that contribute to maintaining a healthy weight).
- Ensure that students have access to healthy snacks and beverages from vending machines or at school stores, canteens, or snack bars.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/Profiles

Healthy Passages

Healthy Passages is a multi-year study that follows a group of fifth-grade students through age 20 to improve our understanding of what factors help keep children healthy. The results will provide information that can be used to develop effective policies and programs to improve the health and development of children, adolescents, and adults. Healthy Passages collects data on dietary intake, as well as data on tobacco and substance use, physical activity, physical and mental health, injuries and violence, sexual behavior, family and peer relationships, and media exposure.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/HealthyPassages

2 Science-Based Guidance

Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating Among Young People

Developed in collaboration with nutrition education experts across the nation, the guidelines identify the most effective policies and practices schools can implement to help young people adopt and maintain healthy eating habits. According to these guidelines—which are based on an extensive review of research, theory, and current practice in school-based nutrition education, dietary behaviors, health education, and public health—nutrition programs are most likely to be effective when schools

- Adopt a coordinated school nutrition policy that promotes healthy eating through classroom lessons and a supportive school environment.
- Implement nutrition education as part of a sequential, comprehensive school health education curriculum to help students adopt healthy eating behaviors.
- Provide nutrition education through developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, fun, participatory learning activities.
- Provide adequate in-service staff training in nutrition education and involve family members and the community in reinforcing healthy eating behaviors.
- Coordinate school food service with nutrition education and with other components of the coordinated school health program.

The guidelines also include recommendations for ensuring quality nutrition education through program evaluation.

An updated version of the *Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating Among Young People* is scheduled for release in 2007.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/guidelines

School Health Index (SHI): A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide

The *SHI* helps schools implement evidence-based policies and practices that promote healthy eating and other healthy behaviors. *SHI* provides the tools and resources needed to assist stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, students, and community members) in assessing health policies and programs and developing an improvement plan based on assessment results. Both print and interactive online versions of the *SHI* are available.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI

Wellness Policy Development Tool

To support the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004, which requires school districts to develop and implement a local wellness policy, CDC has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Action for Healthy Kids to provide an online searchable database of existing or model wellness policies. The database is designed to help local teams develop their own policies by using language from existing or model policies that have been compiled from states and districts around the country.

www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_wp.php

School Nutrition Success Stories

Making It Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories, developed in partnership with USDA and the U.S. Department of Education, describes six key strategies used to improve student nutrition: establish nutrition standards for competitive foods, influence food and beverage contracts, make more healthful foods and beverages available, adopt marketing techniques to promote healthful choices, and limit access to competitive foods. This resource also presents stories from 32 schools and school districts that have made innovative changes to improve the nutritional quality of all foods and beverages offered and sold on school campuses. The most consistent theme emerging from these case studies is that students will buy and consume healthful

foods and beverages, and schools can make money from healthful options. A searchable online version is scheduled to be released in 2007.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen

Promising Practices in Chronic Disease Prevention and Control: A Public Health Framework for Action

This publication provides a framework to help public health officials establish comprehensive chronic disease prevention and control programs that target limited resources where they are most needed and can be most effective. The chapter on school health programs describes promising practices that states should consider when planning school-based policies and programs to help young people avoid behaviors that increase their risk for obesity and chronic disease, including inadequate physical activity. In addition, the nutrition and physical activity chapter describes proven, effective interventions that state and local public health officials and their partners can implement to address the problems of poor nutrition and physical inactivity on a state or community level.

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/publications/pdf/pp-Ch9.pdf

Body Mass Index (BMI) Measurement in Schools: CDC Guidance

Currently under development, this resource summarizes the purposes of BMI surveillance and screening programs and includes information on current practices, reviews of research, and guidance related to BMI measurement programs. The BMI guidance document is based on existing research, the experiences of jurisdictions that have implemented BMI measurement programs, and recommendations from an expert panel convened by CDC.

3 *Funding to State Departments of Education and Health and National Nongovernmental Organizations for Policy and Program Development*

State Programs to Promote Nutrition

DASH supports efforts to promote healthy eating through Coordinated School Health Programs (CSHPs) by providing technical assistance and financial support to state education and health agencies in 23 states. As a result of this assistance, states are able to

- Implement effective nutrition policies, programs, curricula, and standards.
- Provide professional development, consultation, and technical assistance to schools and school districts.
- Implement strategies to reduce health disparities.
- Collaborate with local health and education departments, community planning groups, parents, students, and other groups or coalitions.

National Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) Programs to Promote Healthy Eating

National NGOs support state and local health and education agencies in promoting healthy eating among young people. NGOs can effectively reach target audiences with resources, guidance, training, and technical assistance to develop, implement, and promote healthy eating programs, policies, and practices. Through extensive coordination and collaboration, NGOs promote better health for all students and put research findings into action to support healthier youth.

DASH funds national NGOs to

- Assess needs for training, technical assistance, materials, and other resources.
- Build capacity of other funded partners or constituents through training and technical assistance efforts.

- Identify, develop, and disseminate model strategies, guidelines, program materials, and other resources.
- Assist constituents and other funded partners in developing partnerships.
- Encourage constituents and other funded partners to collaborate with state departments of education and health and community-based organizations.

For example, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) developed *Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide* to provide science-based information to help state, local, and territorial education agencies develop and implement the policies needed to ensure support for school health. The nutrition chapter provides guidance on developing a comprehensive, integrated policy aimed at promoting lifelong healthy eating behaviors among students and school staff. An updated version is scheduled for release in 2008.

www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fithealthy.html

NASBE provides technical assistance, professional development, and information to DASH-funded partners and state board of education members to help local school districts establish, maintain, and evaluate healthy school nutrition environments. NASBE, in collaboration with Action for Healthy Kids, conducts an annual policy symposium to determine how states can help districts with improving students' food choices.

The CSHP Collaborative includes the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (The Society); the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors; and the Directors of Health Promotion and Education. The CSHP Collaborative conducts trainings that bring together state education and health agencies to advance the understanding and implementation of CSHPs, including nutrition education, within schools. In addition to training, the Collaborative provides ongoing support to trainees by hosting CSHP-related conference calls, supplying Website assistance, identifying and promoting additional resources, and conducting follow-up site visits.

The Society and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) developed *Making the Connection: Health and Student Achievement*—a presentation for state and local education decision makers, parents, teachers, and administrators that summarizes research linking health status, health behavior, and academic achievement.

<http://wg.thesociety.org/home/publications>

The Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE) developed *School Employee Wellness: A Guide for Protecting the Assets of our Nation's Schools*, a comprehensive guide that provides information, practical tools, and resources for school employee wellness programs.

www.schoolempwell.org

4 Evaluation

Technical Assistance

DASH provides evaluation support to its funded partners through individual technical assistance and professional development. Technical assistance increases the capacity of funded partners to evaluate and improve their programs by describing their programs using a logic model, developing SMART objectives, and documenting what happened in their programs by maintaining accurate and organized records on program activities and designating a person responsible for process evaluation data.

Program Evaluation

To help identify effective new approaches for promoting the health of young people, DASH provides technical assistance to state and local agencies to evaluate innovative policies and programs. For example, DASH is working with the Rhode Island Department of Education to examine the impact of changes in school policies on the nutritional quality of foods and beverages available in school vending machines.

In another project, DASH and ETR Associates completed a pilot study of dietary attitudes and intake of free fruits and vegetables among all students in 5 of the 25 Mississippi schools competitively selected to participate in the USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program. This project was conducted in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Education and with assistance from USDA and CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO). Additional data analyses are under way.

www.cdc.gov/MMWR/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5535a1.htm

Evaluation Research

CDC conducted an economic analysis of an obesity prevention intervention called *Planet Health*, which was developed by the Harvard Prevention Research Center. Students in schools that implemented *Planet Health* demonstrated improved physical activity and nutrition behaviors, reduced television watching, and lower obesity prevalence among girls. CDC's economic analysis determined that *Planet Health* was both cost-effective and cost-saving. The results of the study were published in the journal *Obesity Research*.

www.obesityresearch.org/cgi/content/abstract/11/11/1313

5 Integration with Other Federal Efforts

DASH collaborates closely with DNPAO, other CDC partners, and other federal agencies to address issues related to nutrition.

- DASH and DNPAO staff work collaboratively to establish science-based guidance addressing healthy eating and overweight among children and adolescents.
- DASH and Steps to a HealthierUS staff members collaborate to provide technical assistance and guidance to 40 communities that receive Steps

funding to support evidence-based school interventions addressing nutrition, physical activity, obesity, diabetes, asthma, and tobacco use.

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Education collaborate in multiple ways, such as
 - Developing and implementing local wellness policies. DASH provides technical assistance and guidance in this effort.
 - Forming a Healthier Children and Youth Memorandum of Understanding Work Group to collectively help children and young people improve nutrition, increase physical activity, avoid risky behaviors, and take preventive health actions—the four pillars of the HealthierUS initiative. DASH actively participates in this work group, and the Division's activities specifically help advance the group's goal.
 - Participating jointly in the National Coordinating Committee on School Health and Safety (NCCSHS). NCCSHS efforts, including integral participation by DASH, bring together federal departments and national nongovernmental organizations in support of high quality, coordinated school health programs.
- DASH sponsored the Institute of Medicine's report recommending nutrition standards for foods in schools, with particular emphasis on foods sold outside of school meals.
www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/30181/42502.aspx
- DASH staff participate in the *Healthy People 2010* Nutrition Work Group.

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