

What Can You Do?

Small Steps Can Make A Big Difference

Individuals

- Eat reasonable food and beverage portion sizes at home and when eating out.
- Eat 5 to 9 fruits and vegetables each day.
- Walk or bicycle more often -- to work or school, for errands, to visit friends, just for the fun of it.
- Be a better driver – obey the speed limit, stop for pedestrians crossing the street, watch out for bicyclists.

Parents

- Serve as good role models by practicing healthy eating habits and by being physical active every day.
- Make sure tasty, attractive fruits and vegetables are available for meals and snacks at home and when eating out.
- Set limits on television viewing.
- Limit access to sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Work with your children’s schools to develop policies regarding: vending machines, use of foods as rewards in classrooms, adequate lunch and recess time, daily PE, safe walking and bicycling routes to school.
- Organize Walk to School Day events in your children’s schools.
- Breastfeed your infant for at least one year.

Employers

- Offer walk/bike/transit incentives like bicycle parking and transit passes.
- Provide exercise and changing facilities at work.
- Post signs near elevators encouraging people to take the stairs.
- Make the stairway a safe and inviting place.
- Support community-wide events that promote physical activity.
- Set standards for foods served at cafeterias, in vending machines, and at meetings.
- Use price incentives in the cafeteria and in vending machines to increase consumption of healthy foods.
- Promote 5 A Day at your worksite.
- Add more water drinking fountains.
- Create a worksite environment supportive of breastfeeding.

Community Member

- Participate in neighborhood, community, and transportation planning groups.
- Support funding for sidewalks, bicycle paths, parks, recreation centers, and swimming pools.
- Declare and organize an annual National “No-TV” Week.
- Join or start a walking or bicycling group in your neighborhood.
- Organize a Farmers’ Market in your neighborhood or community.

- Support policies to promote healthy eating such as disclosing the calorie content of restaurant food and requiring calorie labeling on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants.
- Join advocacy groups promoting community design supportive of safe and accessible walking and bicycling.
- Let your community leaders and elected officials know that you support healthy, active communities.

Architects, Community and Transportation Planners

- Design buildings where stairs are visible, accessible and safe.
- Adjacent to buildings, provide sidewalks, convenient bicycle parking and safe connectivity to public transit.
- Consider public transit, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle paths for walking and bicycling to be as essential as streets and roads for vehicles.
- Design frequent and safe street crossings.
- Design neighborhoods and communities where children and adults can easily and safely travel between home, work, school, retail establishments, parks and recreation facilities on foot and bicycle.

Community Leaders and Policy Makers

- Consider health consequences along with financial impact when developing school policies such as contracts with soft-drink companies, offering daily PE, promoting walking and bicycling to school, or district support for school meal programs.
- Prioritize funding for increasing and improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities in communities.
- Consider public health impacts in land-use planning decisions such as siting of schools, development of mixed-use neighborhoods, and location of farms producing fruits and vegetables near urban areas.
- Consider zoning regulations that allow more Farmers' Markets in neighborhoods.
- Assure access to full-service grocery stores in all neighborhoods and limit density of fast food restaurants.
- Prioritize funding for effective public health interventions to increase physical activity, promote healthy eating, and reduce obesity and chronic diseases.

“Many people believe that overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility. To some degree they are right, but it is also a community responsibility. When there are no safe, accessible places for children to play or adults to walk, jog, or ride a bike, that is a community responsibility. When school lunchrooms and office cafeterias do not provide healthy and appealing food choices, that is a community responsibility. When new or expectant mothers are not educated about the benefits of breastfeeds, that is a community responsibility. When we do not require daily physical education in our schools, that is also a community responsibility. There is much that we can and should do together.” –

David Satcher, The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity,” 2001.