



The Obesity Epidemic and

Massachusetts Students

What is the problem?

The 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that among high school students:

Obesity

- 11% were obese. (1)

Unhealthy Dietary Behaviors

- — ate fruits and vegetables less than five times per day during the 7 days before the survey.
- 25% drank a can, bottle, or glass of soda or pop (not including diet soda or diet pop) at least one time per day during the 7 days before the survey.

Physical Inactivity

- 59% did not meet recommended levels of physical activity. (2)
- 39% did not attend physical education classes. (3)
- 82% did not attend physical education classes daily. (4)
- 28% watched television 3 or more hours per day on an average school day.
- 29% played video or computer games or used a computer for something that was not school work for 3 or more hours per day on an average school day.

What are the solutions?

Better health education • More physical education and physical activity programs • Healthier school environments

What is the status?

The 2006 Massachusetts School Health Profiles indicates that among middle schools and high schools:

Health Education

- 52% required students to take two or more health education courses.
- 45% taught 14 nutrition and dietary behavior topics in a required health education course.
- 32% taught 13 physical activity topics in a required health education course.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

- 79% required students to take two or more physical education courses.
- Among schools that required a physical education course, 77% did not allow students to be exempted from taking a required physical education course for certain reasons. (5)
- 87% offered opportunities for students to participate in intramural activities or physical activity clubs.

School Environment

- In 35%, students could purchase fruits or vegetables. (6)
- In 37%, students could purchase soda pop or fruit drinks that are not 100% juice. (6)
- In 18%, students could purchase chocolate candy. (6)
- In 24%, students could purchase other kinds of candy. (6)
- In 39%, students could purchase salty snacks that are not low in fat, such as regular potato chips. (6)
- In 59%, students could purchase sports drinks. (6)
- 56% did not allow students to purchase candy; snacks that are not low in fat; soda pop, sports drinks, or fruit drinks that are not 100% juice; or 2% or whole milk during school lunch periods.

1. Students who were \geq 95th percentile for body mass index, by age and sex, based on reference data.
 2. Were not physically active doing any kind of physical activity that increased their heart rate and made them breathe hard some of the time for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days during the 7 days before the survey.
 3. On 1 or more days in an average week when they were in school.
 4. 5 days in an average week when they were in school.
 5. Enrollment in other courses, participation in school sports, participation in other school activities, participation in community sports activities, high physical fitness competency test score, participation in vocational training, and participation in community service activities.
 6. From vending machines or at the school store, canteen, or snack bar.
- Data not available.

Where can I get more information? Visit www.cdc.gov/healthyouth or call 800 CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).



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