



The Obesity Epidemic and

United States Students

What is the problem?

The 2007 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that among U.S. high school students:

Overweight

- 13% were obese. (1)

Unhealthy Dietary Behaviors

- 79% ate fruits and vegetables less than five times per day during the 7 days before the survey.
- 34% 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

- 65% did not meet recommended levels of physical activity. (2)
- 46% did not attend physical education classes. (3)
- 70% did not attend physical education classes daily. (4)
- 35% watched television 3 or more hours per day on an average school day.
- 25% 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 • Better nutrition services

What is the status?

The School Health Policies and Programs Study 2006 indicates that among U.S. high schools:

Health Education

- 69% required students to receive instruction on health topics as part of a specific course.
- 53% taught 14 nutrition and dietary behavior topics in a required health education course.
- 38% taught 13 physical activity topics in a required health education course.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

- 95% required students to take physical education; among these schools 59% did not allow students to be exempted from taking a required physical education course for certain reasons. (5)
- 2% required daily physical education or its equivalent for students in all grades in the school for the entire year.
- 45% offered opportunities for students to participate in intramural activities or physical activity clubs.

School Environment

- In 18%, students could purchase fruits or vegetables. (6)
- In 77%, students could purchase soda pop or fruit drinks that are not 100% juice. (6)
- In 50%, students could purchase chocolate candy. (6)
- 52% did not allow students to purchase foods or beverages high in fat, sodium, or added sugars during school lunch periods.

Nutrition Services

- 77% offered a choice between 2 or more different fruits or types of 100% fruit juice each day for lunch.
- 49% did not sell any fried foods as part of school lunch.
- 81% offered lettuce, vegetable, or bean salads a la carte to students during a typical week.

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 in a school store, canteen, or snack bar.

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



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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