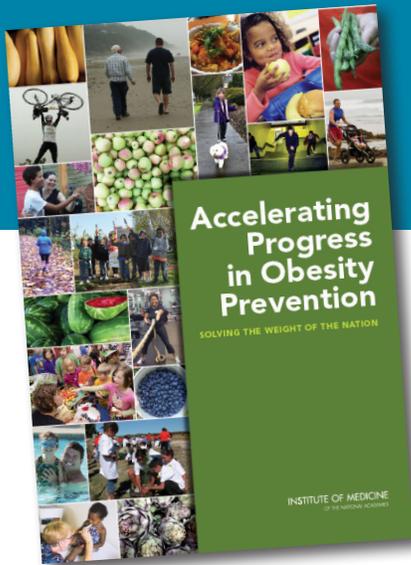


Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention

SOLVING THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION

AN EXPERT REPORT FROM THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE



The Challenges We Face: More than one-third of adults and close to one-fifth of children and adolescents in the United States are obese. Obesity’s effects on health and health care costs could become catastrophic. While many communities are taking important steps to reduce the epidemic, accelerating progress is critical. Success requires action from all of us in the places where we live, work, learn, and play. Progress in one area will reinforce progress in others.

Making Healthy Foods and Beverages Available Everywhere

The foods and beverages that surround us make it difficult to maintain a healthy weight. Making healthy foods and beverages the routine, readily available, and affordable option, along with decreasing unhealthy food and beverage options, will improve our chances to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Why should we strive to bring this vision to life?

Making healthy foods and beverages routine, readily available, and affordable will help Americans achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

TODAY'S REALITY	TOMORROW'S VISION
Sugar-sweetened beverages contribute more calories and added sugars to our diets than any other food or beverage.	Intakes of calories and added sugars from sugar-sweetened beverages are substantially reduced.
A majority of children's fast-food meals are high in calories, unhealthy fat, and salt, and fail to meet the Dietary Guidelines.	Fast-food and chain restaurants offer children's meals that meet the Dietary Guidelines.
Some government-run locations have not taken full advantage of making healthy, competitively-priced foods and beverages accessible.	All government-run locations serve foods and beverages recommended by the Dietary Guidelines.
Many low-income neighborhoods have limited access to healthy, affordable foods.	Everyone has access to food outlets that sell a variety of healthy, affordable foods.
During the process of making farm policies, there is little attention paid to how proposed policies could affect obesity and health.	A Presidential task force reports on the relationships between U.S. agriculture policies and the American diet.

See the other solutions in this series:

- Schools
- Physical Activity
- Marketing
- Workplaces
- Health Care

How could this vision come to life in your community?

BUSINESS COMMUNITY/PRIVATE SECTOR

- Make a variety of healthful, competitively priced food and beverage options available to employees and the general public.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

- Develop and promote healthy beverage options, beverages with reduced sugar content, and smaller portion sizes.
- Reduce the calories in chain and fast-food children's meals and increase competitively priced healthier options.
- Make at least half of all children's meals competitively priced and consistent with the Dietary Guidelines.

GOVERNMENTS

- Align all foods and beverages in government-run locations with the Dietary Guidelines.
- Consider excise taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages with the revenues being dedicated to obesity prevention programs.
- Expand the federal government's healthy vending/concession guidelines to include all government-run locations.
- Use financial incentives and zoning strategies to attract retailers that will promote healthy foods to underserved areas.
- Develop policy options for promoting domestic production of the underconsumed foods recommended for a healthy diet.

ALL

- Provide clean, good-tasting water in public places, workplaces, and recreation areas.
- Support community groups and coalitions in educating the public about the risks of drinking too many sugary beverages, and develop a social marketing campaign to reduce excess intake.

Why should we strive to bring this vision to life?

Evidence shows that...

- There is a strong association between drinking sugar-sweetened beverages and weight gain.
- Children and teens who eat more meals from sit-down and fast-food restaurants have higher calorie intakes and worse diet quality than those who eat less of these meals.
- Eating more fast food as a teen is associated with increases in weight or BMI in young adulthood.
- People with more access to healthy food retailing and limited access to places where healthy foods may not be available or cost more tend to have a lower risk of obesity.

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE

OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Advising the nation • Improving health

500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

TEL 202.334.2352

FAX 202.334.1412

www.iom.edu

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