

Schools cannot do this alone — everyone must help

Home, School, and Community

- Check out your school's environment
- If it doesn't support healthy eating, work to improve these areas:
 - School environment as a priority
 - Policies to make it work
 - Resources adequate for success
- Work for positive change
- Celebrate success

*“The concept of foodservice is not limited to the reimbursable school meal program for which the USDA establishes nutrition standards. High quality local standards are needed for **all** food available on the school campus - including food sold through vending machines and special events - and for the environment in which these foods are made available to students. Although the immediate goal of the school foodservice may be the provision of student meals, the ultimate goals are providing education and establishing lifelong healthful dietary habits.”*

SCHOOLS AND HEALTH, PAGE 73
INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
NATIONAL ACADEMY PRESS, 1997

It takes all of us working together to help our children learn to enjoy healthy eating

Federal level: Nutrition standards for school meals

Education and training materials

Funds to subsidize local resources

State level: Training and technical assistance

Policies that support standards

Funds to subsidize local resources

Local level: Nutrition goals that are a community priority

Policies that support goals

Resources adequate to meet goals

To learn more, contact:

The School Environment

Helping Students Learn to Eat Healthy



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer





“This issue is not an easy one. It needs creative ideas, strong wills, and our most dedicated efforts to find ways to make school environments supportive of good health and nutrition.”

USDA SECRETARY DAN GLICKMAN
HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FORUM
JUNE 24, 1999

Healthy eating is an important life skill

- It helps children grow, develop, and do well in school
- It prevents childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, dental caries, and iron deficiency anemia
- It lowers the risk of future chronic disease such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer and reduces potential health care costs

What is healthy eating?

Healthy eating is following the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommended by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services:

AIM FOR FITNESS...

- Aim for a healthy weight
- Be physically active each day

BUILD A HEALTHY BASE...

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily
- Keep food safe to eat

CHOOSE SENSIBLY...

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt

Many children are flunking healthy eating

- Only 2 percent meet all the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid; 16 percent do not meet any
- Less than 15 percent of school children eat the recommended servings of fruit
- Less than 20 percent eat the recommended servings of vegetables
- About 25 percent eat the recommended servings of grains
- Only 30 percent consume the recommended milk group servings
- Only 19 percent of girls ages 9 to 19 meet the recommended intakes for calcium
- Only 16 percent of school children meet the guidelines for saturated fat

Consequences are troubling

- Childhood obesity is a national epidemic, likely to result in earlier onset and increased prevalence of disease
- The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled in the past 30 years
- Unhealthy eating and physical inactivity are causes of obesity and chronic disease, resulting in at least 300,000 deaths each year
- Poor nutrition associated with heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes, alone, now costs \$71 billion a year

Schools can help turn this around

Local decisions that establish healthy eating as a priority can greatly influence student behavior:

- Involve students and parents in developing food and nutrition policy
- Teach healthy eating skills in the classroom and dining areas
- Serve meals that meet USDA nutrition standards in the school dining areas
- If a la carte foods are offered, be sure they contribute to healthy eating patterns
- If vending machines, snack bars, and school stores are available, be sure they contain healthy snacks
- Schedule meals when children are hungry — not at 10 a.m. or 2 p.m.
- Allow adequate time for children to enjoy their meals with friends
- Provide sufficient serving areas to reduce the time students must wait to receive a meal
- Provide adequate dining space and pleasant ambiance
- Teach by example — adults and peers are role models
- Eliminate use of food as a reward
- Ensure financial decisions do not undermine nutrition goals

