



Promote Safer, Healthier Diets

The Facts

- Two out of three adults and one out of three children and adolescents in the United States are either overweight or obese.^{1,2}
- The top sources of calories for children aged two to 18 are grain desserts (cakes, cookies, donuts, etc.), pizza, and sugar drinks (regular soda, sports drinks, fruit drinks, etc.).³
- One-third of children born after 2000 will likely develop diabetes in their lifetimes.⁴ If current diabetes and obesity trends continue, this generation of kids is expected to live shorter lives than their parents.⁵
- Obesity has immediate effects on a child's health, including increasing the risk of fatty liver disease, causing breathing or joint problems, and social discrimination. In the long-term, obese children are more likely to be obese as adults, and suffer from chronic diseases.⁶
- The annual medical cost for obesity is more than \$150 billion, plus another \$73 billion in reduced productivity.⁷
- Vegetarians, most of whom consume eggs and dairy products, have a 29 percent lower death rate from heart disease and an 18 percent lower risk of cancer than meat-eaters.⁸



What You Can Do

- Hold Food Day events that encourage healthy eating. Highlight issues of healthy food access, poor diet, and junk-food marketing to kids by sponsoring a health fair, film screenings, demonstrations and taste tests, and campaigns for healthy school lunches in your local school district.
- Write or call your U.S. senators, U.S. representative, governor, state legislators, mayor, or city council and ask them to support increased funding for healthy food initiatives, including promotions of fruits and vegetables, campaigns against junk food, or getting rid of junk foods from all city or state property and using the government's buying power to support local and/or organic farming.

- Visit the websites of the [Harvard School of Public Health's Nutrition Source](#), [Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity](#), [Kick the Can](#), and [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#) and learn more about what you can do now.

Photo Credit: Mihline Zahoran

¹ Ogden, C.L. *et al. JAMA*. **307**, 483-490 (2012).

² Flegal, K.M. *et al. JAMA*. **307**, 491-497 (2012).

³ Reedy, J. & Krebs-Smith, S.M. *J Am Diet Assoc*. **110**, 1477-1484 (2010).

⁴ Centers for Disease Control. <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/figuretext07.htm>

⁵ National Institutes of Health. <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/mar2005/ni-16.htm>

⁶ CDC. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/basics.html>. Accessed March 18, 2013.

⁷ Finkelstein, E.A. *et al. J Occup Environ Med*. **52**, 971-976 (2010).

⁸ Huang T. *et al. Ann Nutr Metab*. **60**, 233-240 (2012).