

OBESITY

HALTING THE
EPIDEMIC BY MAKING
HEALTH EASIER

AT A GLANCE
2011

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity





CDC's Response

CDC's **Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity** (DNPAO) is working to improve nutrition and physical activity and reduce obesity through state programs, technical assistance and training, surveillance and applied research, program implementation and evaluation, translation and dissemination, and partnership development.

Supporting State Programs

CDC's **State-Based Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases** (NPAO) currently funds 25 states to work with partners across multiple settings—such as child care facilities, workplaces (including hospitals), schools, and communities—to implement policy, system, and environmental strategies that have been proven to work. These strategies address the five target areas identified by CDC for preventing and reducing obesity, which are to

- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Increase physical activity.
- Increase breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity.
- Decrease consumption of sugar drinks.
- Decrease consumption of high-energy-dense foods, which are high in calories.

The NPAO Program emphasizes the need to reduce health disparities among different population groups, such as racial and ethnic minorities, and requires that states implement a comprehensive state plan. CDC provides technical assistance to help states develop comprehensive plans, implement interventions, and build the leadership needed to improve nutrition and physical activity environments and reduce obesity rates. State program highlights are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/statestories.html>.

CDC's **Communities Putting Prevention to Work** (CPPW) State and Territory Initiative is a 2-year cooperative agreement (2010–2012) that is focused on helping states promote health and prevent chronic disease through sustained policy, system, and environmental strategies. DNPAO provides program and evaluation assistance to 50 states and 8 U.S. territories to help them implement changes to the social and physical environments that make it easier for people to make healthy choices.

DNPAO also provides technical assistance to the CPPW Communities Initiative, which gives direct funding support to selected communities.

Conducting Surveillance and Research

CDC tracks obesity trends among children and adults, as well as policy, environmental, and behavioral factors related to obesity and overweight. For example, in 2010, CDC's new Vital Signs program used 2009 data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to describe the prevalence of obesity at the state level. The data showed that no state had met the national goal of reducing the adult obesity rate to less than 15% and that, in 9 states, at least 30% of adults were obese.

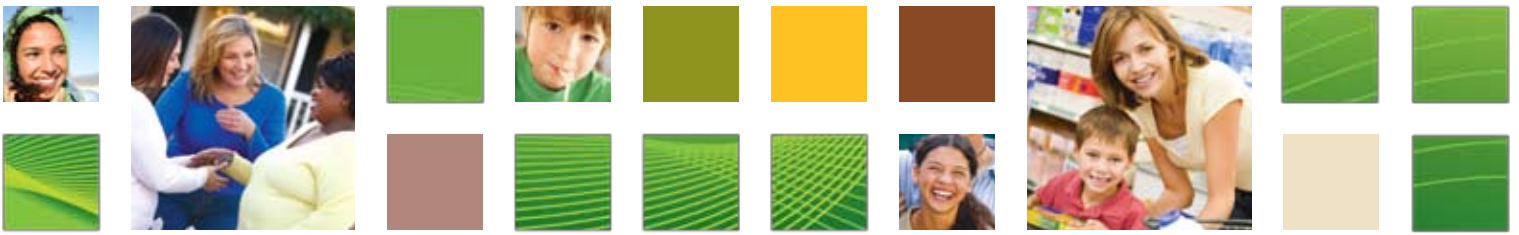
CDC also publishes state-level reports on policy, environmental, and behavioral indicators associated with nutrition (e.g., fruit and vegetable consumption, breastfeeding) and physical activity. States can use these state indicator reports, which include action guides and train-the-trainer materials, to identify priority actions for state coalitions, monitor their progress over time, and celebrate successes.

CDC also identifies, evaluates, translates, and disseminates effective or promising interventions for obesity prevention and control. For example, CDC provides funding and technical support for the **Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network** (NOPREN), whose members include Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) across the country. Network members work to identify effective policies, the factors needed to support them, and the barriers that can prevent their adoption. They also assess whether policy changes can improve people's access to healthy foods and beverages (including water), determine if food labels give people the information they need to make healthy choices, and improve eating behaviors and health outcomes. The Harvard University PRC coordinates the network, and five additional PRCs are funded as collaborating centers.

Working with Partners

CDC is making progress in stopping the obesity epidemic through innovative partnerships such as the following:

- The **Healthy Eating Active Living Convergence Partnership** fosters policy and environmental change by working with partners in fields not traditionally involved in public



CDC's Response (continued)

health. The group is currently focused on changing transportation and food systems to develop active living environments and improve access to healthy foods. Partners include the California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Nemours, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

CDC provides technical assistance, PolicyLink (a national research and action institute) provides program direction, and the national, nonprofit Prevention Institute provides policy research, analysis, and strategic support.

- The **National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research** (NCCOR) brings together research funders in a public-private collaboration to accelerate progress on reversing the epidemic of overweight and obesity among U.S. youth. NCCOR's focus is on identifying and evaluating effective interventions (particularly policy and environmental interventions) at individual, community, and population levels. The NCCOR Web site provides a database of diet and physical activity measures used in childhood obesity research and a catalog of relevant surveillance systems. (<http://www.nccor.org>)

NCCOR members build on each other's strengths through complementary and joint projects. Partners include the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, National Institutes of Health, CDC, and U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Translating Practice-Based Evidence and Research

CDC translates practice-based evidence and research findings for use by practitioners, communities, and the public to foster environments that support healthy eating and active living. Recent efforts and products include the following:

- The **Center of Excellence for Training and Research Translation** (Center TRT) works with CDC's NPAO Program to bridge the gap between research and public health practice, with a focus on nutrition, physical activity,

and the prevention and control of obesity. The Center TRT Web site presents information on intervention strategies that focus on the factors that contribute to obesity and on interventions that have been used and evaluated in other communities. It also provides Web-based training modules on obesity and other chronic diseases and tools that can help practitioners implement effective interventions in their communities. (<http://www.center-trt.org>)

CDC also cosponsors an obesity prevention course on policy and environmental change strategies each year with the Center TRT at the University of North Carolina. Forty public health practitioners attended in 2010 to learn how to promote integrated strategies at state and community levels to address health equity.

- *LEAN Works!* Leading Employees to Activity and Nutrition is a Web-based resource that offers interactive tools and evidence-based resources that can be used to design effective workplace programs to prevent and control obesity. (<http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks>)
- The Healthy Weight Web site includes a body mass index (BMI) calculator and gives people information and tools to help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight for a lifetime. (<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight>)
- *The Body Mass Index: Considerations for Practitioners* fact sheet summarizes the science behind BMI. It emphasizes that BMI is not a diagnostic tool, but a population surveillance tool and a screening tool designed to identify people who may be at risk for health problems because of their weight. (<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/BMIforPractitioners.pdf>)
- The Weight Management Research to Practice Series summarizes the science in this area and highlights the implications of research findings for public health and medical care professionals. (<http://www.cdc.gov/weightr2p>)

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