



The Obesity Epidemic and

Massachusetts Students

What is the problem?

The 2007 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that among high school students:

Obesity

- 11% were obese. (1)

Unhealthy Dietary Behaviors

- — ate fruits and vegetables less than five times per day during the 7 days before the survey.
- 25% 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

- 59% did not meet recommended levels of physical activity. (2)
- 39% did not attend physical education classes. (3)
- 82% did not attend physical education classes daily. (4)
- 28% watched television 3 or more hours per day on an average school day.
- 29% 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

What is the status?

The 2008 Massachusetts School Health Profiles indicates that among middle schools and high schools:

Health Education

- 59% required students to take two or more health education courses.
- 55% taught 14 key nutrition and dietary behavior topics in a required course.
- 46% taught 12 key physical activity topics in a required course.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

- 75% taught a required physical education course in all grades in the school.
- 73% did not allow students to be exempted from taking a required physical education course for certain reasons. (5)
- 83% offered opportunities for all students to participate in intramural activities or physical activity clubs.

School Environment

- 57% did not sell less nutritious foods and beverages anywhere outside the school food service program.
- 16% always offered fruits or non-fried vegetables in vending machines and school stores, canteens, or snack bars, and during celebrations when foods and beverages are offered.
- 70% prohibited all forms of advertising and promotion of candy, fast food restaurants, or soft drinks in all locations. (6)
- 94% had a copy of their district's wellness policy.
- 43% used the School Health Index or a similar self-assessment tool to assess their policies, activities, and programs in physical activity.
- 46% used the School Health Index or a similar self-assessment tool to assess their policies, activities, and programs in nutrition.

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. In school buildings; on school grounds, including on the outside of the school building, on playing fields, or other areas of the campus; on school buses or other vehicles used to transport students; and in school publications.
 - Data not available.

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



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