

Nutrition and Youth Health Statistics

Consumption Habits

- American children obtained 50 percent of their calories from added fat and sugar (35 percent and 15 percent, respectively), and only 1 percent ate diets that resembled the Food Guide Pyramid.¹
- About 25 percent of what adolescents eat is considered junk food, such as deep-fried foods, desserts, regular soft drinks, candy, cookies, pies and cakes.²
- Fewer than 15 percent of school children eat the recommended servings of fruit, and less than 20 percent eat the recommended servings of vegetables.³
- Only 2 percent of teenagers in California met five key diet and activity recommendations.⁴

Obesity

- Nearly 34 percent of children age 9-11 years, and 21 percent of 12-17 year olds are at risk for overweight or overweight.^{5,6}
- A recent study showed that consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda and fruit-flavored drinks, is associated with obesity in children.⁷

Diabetes

- An increase in Type 2 diabetes among children has paralleled the rising rates of obesity. ⁸ As many as 30,000 children have non-insulin-dependent diabetes that was once limited to adults.

Osteoporosis

- Female adolescents and young adult women (ages 9-19) do not meet the recommended intake for calcium, with only about 1 in 10 consuming the recommended number of daily servings of milk products. ⁹
- Soda consumption has almost doubled in the last 20 years. ¹⁰ When children and adolescents replace milk with soft drinks, they consume fewer valuable nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D, which are needed for bone development and can help to prevent osteoporosis (porous bones). Since prevention occurs by reaching optimal bone mass during adolescence, it is not possible to make up any deficiencies later in life.

Dental Caries

- Dental caries affects over 50 percent of youths ages 5-17. More than 51 million hours of school time are lost every year because of dental-related illnesses.¹¹
- Frequent exposure to sugar-sweetened soft drinks and candy increases risk for and severity of tooth decay.¹²

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References

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