



# Obesity: Interventions to Increase Availability of Healthier Foods and Beverages in Schools

## Summary of Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) issued four findings for intervention approaches to increase the availability of healthier meals, snacks, and beverages in schools.



### The CPSTF recommends:

- Meal interventions and fruit and vegetable snack interventions to increase the availability of healthier foods and beverages provided by schools.
- Multicomponent interventions to increase availability of healthier foods and beverages in schools (i.e., meal interventions and fruit and vegetable snack interventions in combination with healthier snack foods and beverages).

### The CPSTF finds insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of the following:

- Interventions supporting healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward in schools.
- Interventions to increase availability of healthier foods and beverages in schools (i.e., meal interventions and fruit and vegetable snack interventions in combination with healthier snack foods and beverages).

## What are Interventions to Increase Healthier Foods and Beverages in Schools?

<b>Meal Interventions and Fruit and Snack Interventions</b>	<p>Include one of the following components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School meal policies that ensure school breakfasts or lunches meet specific nutrition requirements (e.g., School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program)</li> <li>○ Fresh fruit and vegetable programs that provide fresh fruits and vegetables to students during lunch or snack</li> </ul>
<b>Interventions Supporting Healthier Snack Foods and Beverages Sold or Offered as a Reward</b>	<p>Include one of the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food and beverage policies that require foods and beverages sold during the school day, outside of school meal programs, meet established nutritional standards or guidelines</li> <li>○ Celebration and reward rules or policies that encourage healthy foods and beverages be served during classroom celebrations, parties, and special events or promote rewards of nonfood items for academic achievement</li> </ul>
<b>Multicomponent Interventions</b>	<p>Include one component from each of the following interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meal and fruit and vegetable snack interventions</li> <li>○ Healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward in school</li> </ul>
<b>Interventions to Increase Water Access in Schools</b>	<p>Ensure students have access to safe, free drinking water during the school day</p>

Each intervention may also include one or more of the following:

- Healthy food and beverage marketing strategies
  - Placing healthier foods and beverages where they are easier for students to choose
  - Lowering the price of healthier foods and beverages
  - Setting up attractive displays of healthy foods
  - Offering taste tests of new menu items
  - Posting signs or written prompts to promote healthier foods and beverages and new menu items
- Healthy eating learning opportunities (i.e. nutrition education)



## Major Findings

- Meal interventions and fruit and vegetable snack interventions increased fruit and vegetable consumption and reduced or maintained the prevalence of obesity or overweight among students.
- Multicomponent interventions reduced or maintained the prevalence of obesity or overweight among students.
- Evidence on interventions supporting healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward in schools was inconsistent, and there were too few studies to determine the effectiveness of interventions increasing water access in schools.

A systematic review of economic evidence found that meal interventions and fruit and vegetable snack interventions are cost-effective. The estimated cost per quality-adjusted life year (QALY) gained and the cost per disability-adjusted life year (DALY) averted both fell under frequently used benchmarks for cost effectiveness.

## Facts about Childhood Obesity and Schools

- Obesity affects 1 in 6 children in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- Childhood obesity increases the risk of being obese in adulthood, which is associated with heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Most children in the United States spend at least six hours a day at school and consume as much as half of their daily calories at school.<sup>4</sup>

### Learn More

#### Summary of Evidence and CPSTF Finding and Full-text Publications

<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/obesity-meal-fruit-vegetable-snack-interventions-increase-healthier-foods-beverages-schools>

#### CDC, Obesity Prevention and Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/index.html>

#### CDC, Healthy Schools

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/schoolnutrition.htm>

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). Childhood Overweight and Obesity. Overweight and Obesity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/>.

<sup>2</sup>Gordon-Larsen P, The NS, Adair LS. Longitudinal trends in obesity in the United States from adolescence to the third decade of life. *Obesity*. 2010;18(9):1801–804.

<sup>3</sup>Jensen MD, Ryan DH, Apovian CM, et al, for the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines; Obesity Society. 2013 AHA/ACC/TOS guideline for the management of overweight and obesity in adults: a report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines and The Obesity Society. *J Am Coll Cardiol*. 2014;63(25 Pt B):2985–3023. doi: 10.1016/j.jacc.2013.11.004.

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). School Nutrition. Health Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/schoolnutrition.htm>.

Established in 1996 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) is an independent, nonfederal panel of public health and prevention experts whose members are appointed by the director of CDC. The CPSTF provides information for a wide range of decision makers on programs, services, and other interventions aimed at improving population health. Although CDC provides administrative, scientific, and technical support for the CPSTF, the recommendations developed are those of the CPSTF and do not undergo review or approval by CDC. Find more information at [www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org).



**Your Guide of What Works  
to Promote Healthy  
Communities**

[thecommunityguide.org](http://thecommunityguide.org)  
@CPSTF