



## Community Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation

The [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) (Task Force) issued separate findings for four types of interventions to increase the availability of healthier meals, snacks, and beverages in schools.



1. The Task Force recommends [meal and fruit and vegetable snack interventions](#) to increase the availability of healthier foods and beverages provided by schools. This finding is based on sufficient evidence that eating more fruits and vegetables in school can promote healthy weight among children and reduce obesity.
2. The Task Force recommends [multicomponent interventions to increase availability of healthier foods and beverages](#) in schools (i.e., meal and fruit and vegetable snack interventions in combination with healthier snack foods and beverages). This finding is based on sufficient evidence of effectiveness for reducing or not changing the prevalence of obesity or overweight.
3. The Task Force finds insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of interventions supporting [healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward](#) in schools. Evidence is considered insufficient because too few studies evaluated comparable dietary and weight outcomes.
4. The Task Force finds insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of [interventions to increase water access](#) in schools.

These recommendations are based on systematic reviews of all available studies, conducted on behalf of the Task Force by a team of specialists in systematic review methods, and in research, practice, and policy related to obesity prevention and control.

## Facts about Obesity

Obese children are more likely to have risk factors associated with heart disease and type 2 diabetes, and are more likely to become obese adults.<sup>1-3</sup> Schools can play an important role in preventing obesity because most U.S. children attend school six hours a day and consume as much as half of their daily calories at school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Schools can provide a variety of nutritious and appealing foods and beverages in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and concession stands.<sup>4</sup>

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

Interventions to support healthier foods and beverages in schools include one of the following:

1. Meal interventions and fruit and vegetable snack interventions to increase the availability of healthier foods and beverages provided by schools. Interventions must include one of the following:
  - a. School meal policies that ensure school breakfasts or lunches meet specific nutrition requirements (e.g., School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program).
  - b. Fresh fruit and vegetable programs that provide fresh fruits and vegetables to students during lunch or snack
2. Multicomponent interventions to increase availability of healthier foods and beverages in schools must include one component from each of the following interventions
  - a. Meal and fruit and vegetable snack interventions, and
  - b. Healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward in school.

3. Interventions supporting healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward in schools must include one of the following
  - a. 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.
  - b. Celebration and reward rules or policies that encourage healthy foods and beverages be served during classroom celebrations, parties, and special events or encourage rewards of nonfood items for academic achievement.
4. Interventions to increase water access in schools ensure students have access to safe, free drinking water during the school day.

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

- Healthy food and beverage marketing strategies that include promoting healthier options through attractive and easy-to-see displays
- Placing healthier foods and beverages where they are easier for students to choose
- Lowering the price of healthier foods and beverages
- Offering taste tests of new menu items
- Posting signs or written prompts to promote healthier foods and beverages and new menu items



## Major Findings

The Task Force issued four findings of interventions to increase the availability of healthier meals, snacks, and beverages in schools.

1. The Task Force recommends meal and fruit and vegetable snack interventions based on sufficient evidence that eating more fruits and vegetables in school can promote healthy weight among children and reduce obesity.
2. The Task Force recommends multicomponent interventions based on sufficient evidence of effectiveness for reducing or not changing the prevalence of obesity or overweight.
3. The Task Force finds insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of interventions supporting healthier snack foods and beverages sold or offered as a reward in schools. Evidence is considered insufficient because too few studies evaluated comparable dietary and weight outcomes.
4. The Task Force finds insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of interventions to increase water access in schools.

### Learn More

#### Summary of Evidence and Task Force Finding

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

#### CDC Obesity Prevention and Control Program

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

#### School Health Branch Comprehensive Framework

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/pdf/school\\_nutrition\\_framework\\_508tagged.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/pdf/school_nutrition_framework_508tagged.pdf)

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) is an independent, nonfederal, panel of public health and prevention experts. It is congressionally mandated to identify community preventive programs, services, and other interventions that save American lives and dollars, increase longevity, and improve quality of life. The Community Guide is a collection of all the evidence-based findings and recommendations of this Task Force. Find more information at [www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides administrative, scientific, and technical support for the Community Preventive Services Task Force.

<sup>1</sup>Freedman DS, Mei Z, Srinivasan SR, Berenson GS, Dietz WH. Cardiovascular risk factors and excess adiposity among overweight children and adolescents: the Bogalusa Heart Study. *J Pediatr* 2007;150(1):12-7 e2.

<sup>2</sup>Rosenbloom AL, Joe JR, Young RS, Winter WE. Emerging epidemic of type 2 diabetes in youth. *Diabetes Care* 1999;22(2):345-54.

<sup>3</sup>Biro FM, Wien M. Childhood obesity and adult morbidities. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2010;91(5):1499s-505s.

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Comprehensive Framework for Addressing the School Nutrition Environment and Services. Atlanta (GA): 2016b [cited 2017 Jan 4]. Available from: [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/pdf/school\\_nutrition\\_framework\\_508tagged.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/pdf/school_nutrition_framework_508tagged.pdf).