Childhood obesity is epidemic in the United States.
• 15.3% of children 6-11 are overweight, an increase of 382% since 1974.1
• 15.5% of children 12-19 are overweight, an increase of 258% since 1974.2

Childhood obesity is a serious disease.
• Complications of childhood obesity include type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, chronic inflammation and hyperinsulinemia, among many other illnesses.
• Childhood obesity is a difficult disease to cure; once children become obese they are predisposed to obesity for the rest of their lives.
• Potential complications—especially cardiovascular disease—grow more serious with age.

The human toll of the obesity epidemic in the United States is staggering.
• Between 280,000 and 325,000 people die each year from obesity.7 In comparison, about 418,000 die from smoking-related illnesses.8

Soda consumption is rising sharply among children.
• From 1977 to 1996, soda consumption by 12-19 year olds increased 75% for boys and 40% for girls.9
• The average 12-ounce soda contains about 150 calories, including about 40 grams (10 teaspoons) of added sugars.
• Many soda brands contain caffeine, a mildly addictive stimulant.

Kids who drink more soda are more likely to become obese.
• The likelihood of “becoming obese among children increased 1.6 times for each additional can or glass of sugar-sweetened drink that they consumed every day.” — Lancet10

Sale of soft drinks and candy is rife in the schools.
• The majority of K-12 schools (93.6%, 83.5% and 58.1% of senior, middle/junior and elementary schools) allow the sale of soft drinks and other high-added-sugar drinks in vending machines, school store, cafeteria or canteen.
• 72.2%, 46.6% and 29.2% of senior, middle/junior and elementary schools allow the sale of chocolate candy.11

Fast food outlets are growing more common in schools.
• 20.2% of schools sell high-fat fast food such as Pizza Hut and McDonald’s.12

Junk food companies have harnessed the schools to promote junk food.
• Channel One, an in-school TV marketing program, plays two minutes of ads each school day to 5.7 million children in 12,000 schools, including ads for Hostess Twinkies, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, M&M’s and Snickers bars.
• Of school districts that allow companies such as Coca-Cola and PepsiCo to sell soft drinks at school, 35.3% allow the companies to place their ads in school buildings and 43% allow the ads on school grounds.13

Few schoolchildren are protected from junk food marketers.
• No states prohibit sales of junk food in a la carte service.14
• Only West Virginia bans the sale of junk food in vending machines.15
• Only Colorado, Connecticut and West Virginia ban the sale of junk food in school stores.16

We’re winning! Recent victories in removing junk food marketing from schools:
• California: banned sale of junk food and soda in elementary schools and sale of soda in middle schools as of 1/1/04 (10/01).
• Texas: banned sale of soda, candy, foods of minimal nutritional value from hallways, lunchrooms, common areas during mealtimes (4/02).
• Los Angeles: banned sale of soda in all LA public schools as of 1/1/04 (8/02).
• Oakland: banned sale of soda, candy from Oakland public schools (12/01).
• Nashville: banned Channel One from Nashville public schools (9/02).
• San Francisco: banned sale of soda, candy in cafeterias as of 2003-4 school year (1/03).
• Seattle: banned Channel One from Seattle public schools as of 2004-5 school year (11/01).
 SOURCES


4 Ogden et al., JAMA. 2002;288:1728-1732.

5 Overweight is diagnosed among children, while obesity is diagnosed among adults.


10 Ludwig, The Lancet, 2/17/01.


