



Adolescent Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines

Promote Healthy Weight

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PURPOSE: Adolescent and Family Life Program (AFLP) case managers promote healthy weight behaviors to their clients.

Adolescence is an Important Time for Good Nutrition and Physical Activity

Adolescence is accompanied by a sudden growth spurt associated with hormonal, cognitive, and emotional changes that make adolescence an especially vulnerable period of life.

There is a greater demand for calories and nutrients due to the dramatic increase in physical growth and development over a relatively short period of time.

Adolescence is a time of changing lifestyles and food habits that affect both nutrient needs and intake.

Factors that Contribute to Poor Adolescent Eating Habits

- Easily available, low-cost, high-fat and/or high-sugar, low-nutrient foods, such as French fries, candy, chips, or soda
- Limited access to healthy foods that appeal to teens
- Perception that healthy, low-in-fat, unprocessed, nutrient-dense foods (high in nutrients compared with their caloric content) are inconvenient and lack taste
- Lack of knowledge regarding appropriate nutrition and the health impact of poor nutrition
- Poor parental role modeling
- Lack of food shopping and preparation classes at school (e.g., home economics), resulting in the lack of relevant skills
- Increased incidence of disordered eating due to 1) fear of weight gain, 2) desire to build muscle mass, 3) to meet sports weight cut-offs, and 4) media and advertising messages

Common Adolescent Nutrition Concerns

Adolescents of both sexes and in all income and racial/ethnic groups are at risk for dietary excesses and deficiencies.

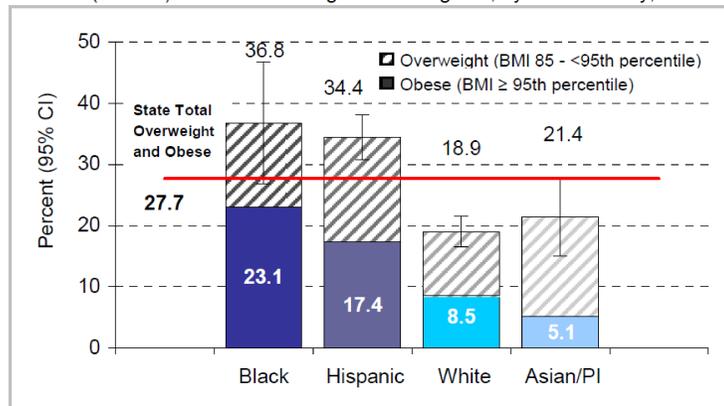
Dietary excesses of total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar commonly occur. Most adolescents do not meet dietary recommendations for fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich foods.¹

Some nutrition-related concerns for adolescents include consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, iron-deficiency anemia, inadequate calcium intake, unsafe weight-loss methods and eating disorders.

Overweight and obesity in children and adolescents is often caused by poor eating habits and physical inactivity or a combination of the two.²

Adolescent Overweight and Obesity

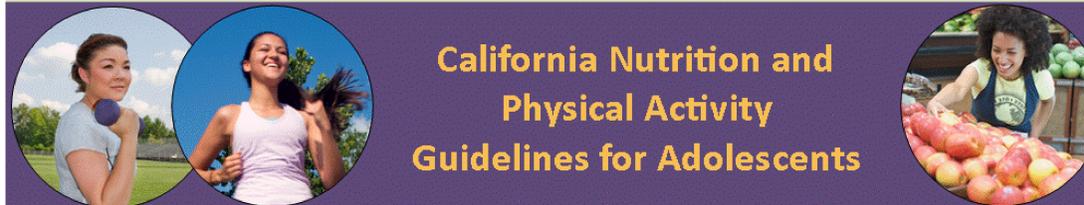
Percent (95% CI) of adolescents ages 12 through 17, by race/ethnicity, 2007



Data source: California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)
Notes: BMI = Body Mass Index; PI = Pacific Islander

California Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP)

Using Title V funding, the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Division of the Center for Family Health, within the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) administers the California Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP). This program addresses the consequences of adolescent pregnancy by providing comprehensive case management to pregnant and parenting teens, including nutrition guidance. This program serves as an excellent contact point for interconception counseling regarding healthy weight.



California Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Adolescents

The Guidelines were designed by the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division of the California Department of Public Health. They are to assist Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) case managers in improving the nutrition, physical activity, and healthy eating practices of AFLP clients. They can and have been used by other adolescent programs.

The Guidelines include several nutrition topics including adolescent nutrition, physical activity and weight management to serve as a reference for case managers working with teens. They also address motivational counseling and provide education handouts tailored to adolescents. The Guidelines are continuously being updated, so check this webpage for revised versions:

<http://cdph.ca.gov/NUPA-MCAH>



Using Guidelines

These guidelines address adolescent nutrition and physical activity topics. Although providing this accurate nutrition information is important, the delivery of just the content is not enough to change dietary behavior.

Adolescents are more attentive to information if it is presented in an interactive way; they prefer not to simply listen to a speaker or read material. Accompanying education activities should be quick and fun, and demonstrate that healthy foods are affordable, easy to prepare and can be flavorful.

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Sample Guidelines

Weight Management

The Truth about Dieting

My Action Plan for Weight Management



Additional Nutrition and Physical Activities Resources

MCAH Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative Website: www.cdph.ca.gov/nupa-mcah

Visit this nutrition and physical activity website that is tailored to maternal, child and adolescent populations often for new publications and other resources, including tips on how you can promote worksite wellness in your organization.

The following resources complement the AFLP Guidelines and are available on the above website:

- **Easy Meals and Snacks: A Healthy Cookbook for Teens:** This cookbook is designed for teens and is available in English, Spanish and in a print-friendly booklet format.
- **California MyPlate for Moms/My Nutrition Plan for Moms:** This food guide and nutrition plan is designed for pregnant and postpartum women and teens. Available in English and Spanish.
- **California MyPlate for Gestational Diabetes:** This food guide and nutrition plan is for pregnant women who have gestational diabetes and for breastfeeding women who have experienced gestational diabetes. Available in English and Spanish.

Intervention Status

- The Guidelines are currently being updated, so check for revised versions at www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/healthyliving/nutrition/Pages/TeenGuidelines.aspx. Revisions in process include "Nutrition Risk Screening" and "Body Image and Disordered Eating."
- The new Guidelines have been incorporated into all 33 AFLP programs that serves approximately 4,900 clients annually.
- MCAH will continue to monitor adolescent body mass index and nutrition and physical activity habits.

Conclusion and Health Implications

- States may use Title V funds to promote optimal nutrition and physical activity for adolescents.
- If interested in modifying or using the materials in any derivative work, contact the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division. For inquiries or to obtain permission for modification or use of the materials in any derivative work, please contact:

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2. The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.html, 2012.