

The *California Teen Eating, Exercise and Nutrition Survey (CalTEENS)* is the most extensive dietary and physical activity assessment of adolescents between 12 and 17 years in the state of California. *CalTEENS* was developed in 1997 and is administered biennially in even years. The survey is designed to monitor dietary trends, especially fruit and vegetable consumption, for evaluating California teens’ progress toward meeting the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Healthy People 2020 Objectives. In 2012, the survey sample (n=1,143) was selected in part through random digit-dial (RDD) and in part through a list of low-income households in the state. This document highlights the most notable findings from the 2012 survey and references the more detailed findings posted to the [Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch’s website](#).

Key Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

- White
- Hispanic
- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander

Household SNAP/CalFresh Status, Federal Poverty Level (FPL) %

- Participant
- Likely Eligible, ≤130% FPL
- Ineligible, >185% FPL

Fruits & Vegetables:

- Fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents was 2.3 cups per day, a full cup below the low-end of the range recommended for teens. The *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends that adolescents consume between 3.5 and 6.5 cups of fruits and vegetables each day, depending on gender, age, and activity level. **(Table 1)**
- Half of California teens (49.1%) reported not eating any vegetables or salad the day before the survey. **(Table 4)**
- Over two-thirds of adolescents (68.4%) reported that they have been taught how to cook healthy food. **(Table 58)** These teens reported consuming 1.4 servings more fruits and vegetables than their peers who have not learned healthy cooking skills (4.7 vs, 3.3 servings). **(Table 53)** Cooking classes in schools and after-school programs provide opportunities to promote healthy eating habits.

Milk & Dairy Products:

- Average consumption of milk and dairy products among adolescents was 3.1 servings per day, meeting the recommended 3 or more daily servings. **(Table 16)**
- Only about one-third of adolescents (35.4%) reported that most of the milk they drink was non-fat (skim) or low-fat (1%). **(Table 19)** The *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends consuming non-fat or low-fat milk and other dairy products (cheese, yogurt, etc.).

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Dining Out:

- Since 2002, the percent of adolescents drinking soda and other sugary drinks has steadily decreased by one-third, from 69.6% to 46.3%. **(Trend Table 69)**
- Teens from CalFresh participant households (51.7%) and likely eligible homes (57.9%) reported drinking soda and sugary drinks more often than teens from ineligible households (36.6%). **(Table 69)**



- Over a quarter of teens (27.1%) reported eating at a fast food restaurant the prior day (**Table 34**), and on average ate fast food once (0.9 times) per week. (**34d**)

Physical Activity (PA):

- Only half of adolescents (49.3%) reported being physically active for at least 60 minutes a day, which is the recommended level for PA. Teen boys (52.8%) were more likely than teen girls (45.6%) to meet the PA guideline. (**Table 36**)
- Adolescents who engage in PA with friends reported more than twice as much total physical activity on the prior day (72.0 minutes) than teens who do not engage in PA with friends (33.1 minutes). (**Table 60**)
- Over a third of students reported walking, biking, or skateboarding to (34.0%) or from (36.8%) school four or more times in a typical week. About half of CalFresh participants reported actively commuting to (49.9%) and from (52.0%) school four or more days per week. (**Table 88**)
- Overall, adolescents are not getting enough PA, and adolescent girls are getting less than boys. Interventions targeting teen girls may be warranted to address this gender gap. Because many teens cannot correctly identify how much PA they should be getting, education in this area may contribute to better outcomes, as well as helping teens to find ways to buddy up with friends.

Overweight and Obesity:

- One of every nine (11.2%) adolescents was obese, based on self-reported height and weight. Rates of obesity were even higher among teens from CalFresh (14.6%) and likely eligible (13.8%) households. (**Table 45**)
- One-quarter (25.3%) of adolescents were overweight or obese. (**Table 45**)
- Since CalTEENS began tracking adolescent BMI in 1998, obesity prevalence has increased by 40% among California teens, from 8.0% to 11.2%. (**Trend Table 45a**)

School Environment:

- Students who reported usually or sometimes liking the lunches served at school were less likely to be overweight. (**Table 53**) Providing appealing food choices at school may increase the likelihood that students will eat healthy school meals and may lead to improved long-term health outcomes.
- About a quarter of teens (25.8%) reported advertising for name brand foods or beverages on school property, and 18.3% reported that free samples for name brand foods or beverages had been distributed at school. (**Table 79**)
- Almost half of adolescents (46.8%) reported that the nearest fast food restaurant was within a half mile of their school. Six out of ten (62.4%) reported that there was a convenience store within a half mile. (**Table 33**)
- About three-quarters of teens said that they are either somewhat (56.7%) or very (18.9%) interested in taking action to improve nutrition or physical activity in their school and community, while over a quarter (27.4%) said that they already have. (**Table 92**)