

Food and Fitness in Our Schools: Policies, Challenges, and Strategies for Improvement

Safe Table Forum, Sea-Tac Nov 13-14, 2003

Setting the stage for the day

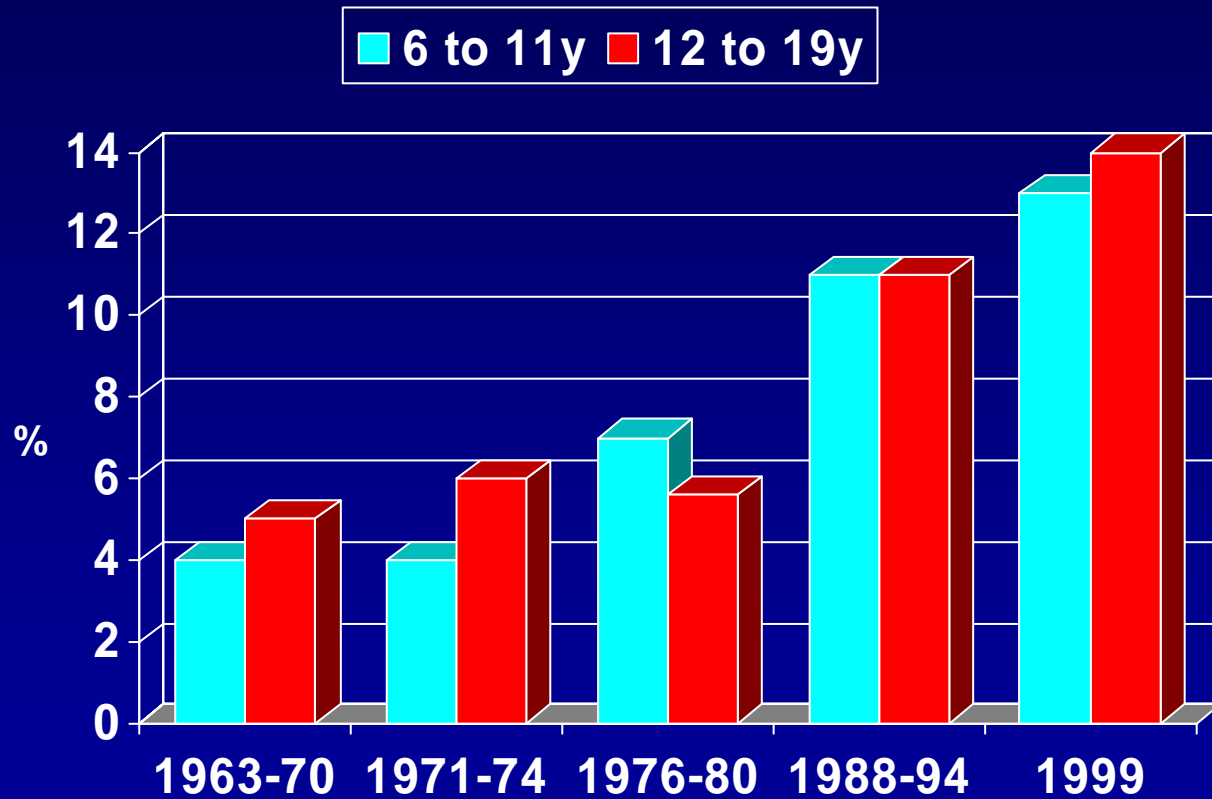
- **Why are we here?**
- **What is the issue?**
- **Why schools?**
- **Topics for discussion and/or debate**
 - **The obesity epidemic**
 - **The changing food & PA environment**
 - **A diversity of perspectives (public health, schools, industry, AAP)**
 - **Today we will hear about the problems . . . and possible solutions**

Who is overweight and obese?

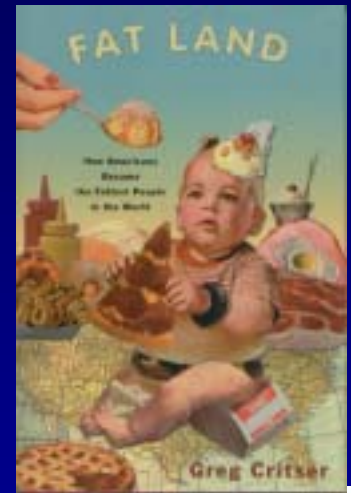
- BMI is wt/ht^2 (kg/m^2)
- Kids
 - Overweight: $>95^{\text{th}}$ %ile BMI-for-age
 - At Risk: $85\text{-}95^{\text{th}}$ %ile BMI-for-age
- Adults (≥ 20 years)
 - Overweight: $\text{BMI} \geq 25 < 30$
 - Obesity: $\text{BMI} \geq 30$



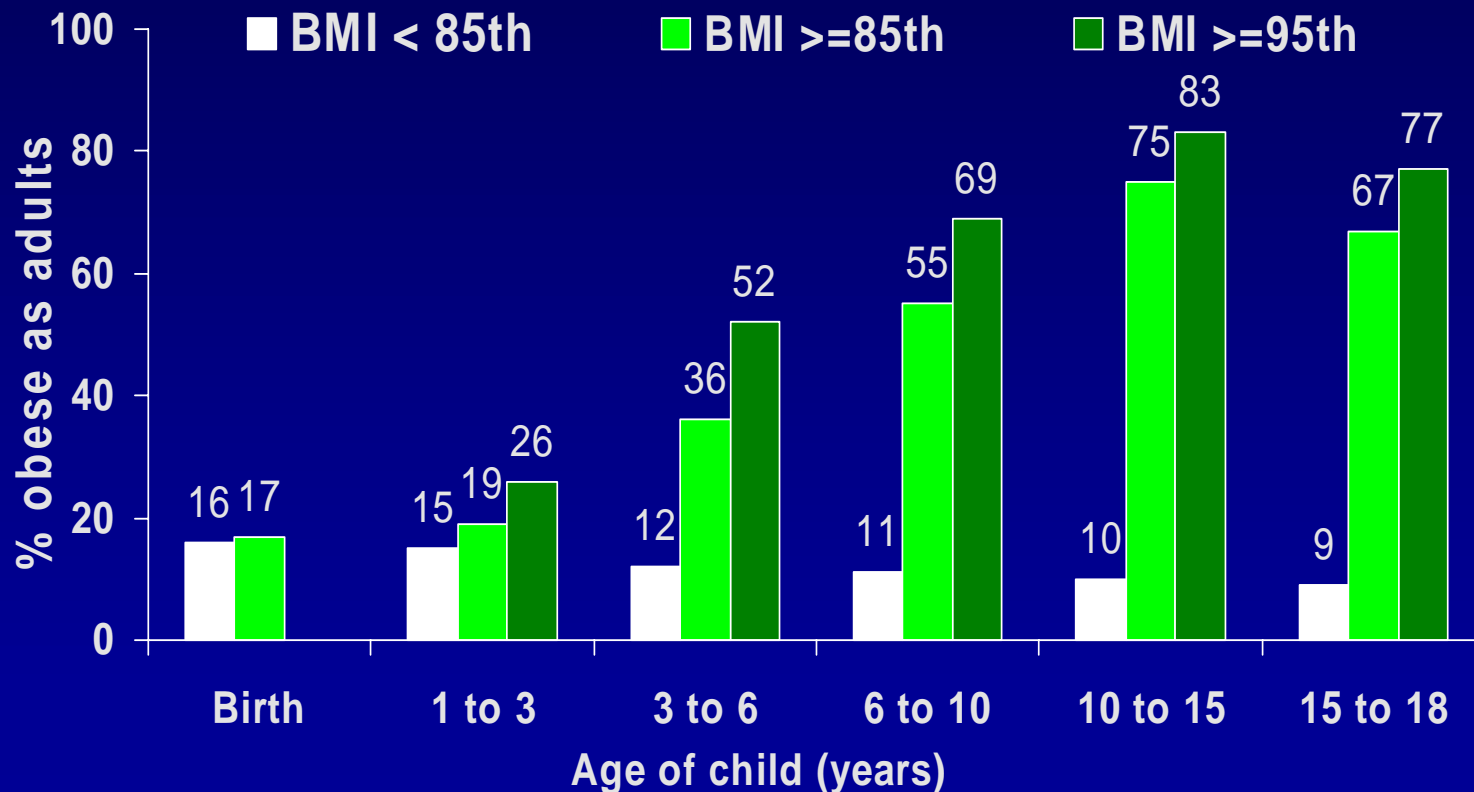
Rates of overweight among children and adolescents have doubled (US 1963-1999)



Data from CDC/NCHS, NHES and NHANES



Tracking BMI-for-age from birth to 18 y: Overweight children become obese adults at age 25¹



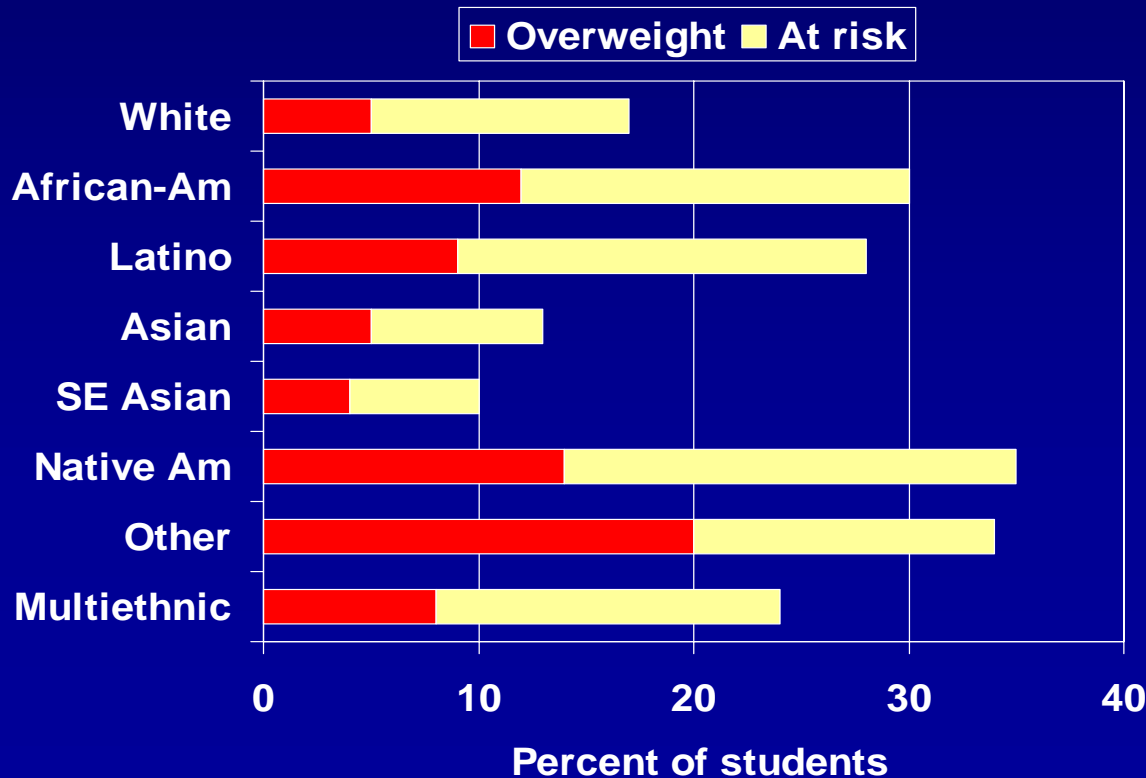
Whitaker et al. NEJM 1997;337:869-873



The problem at home:

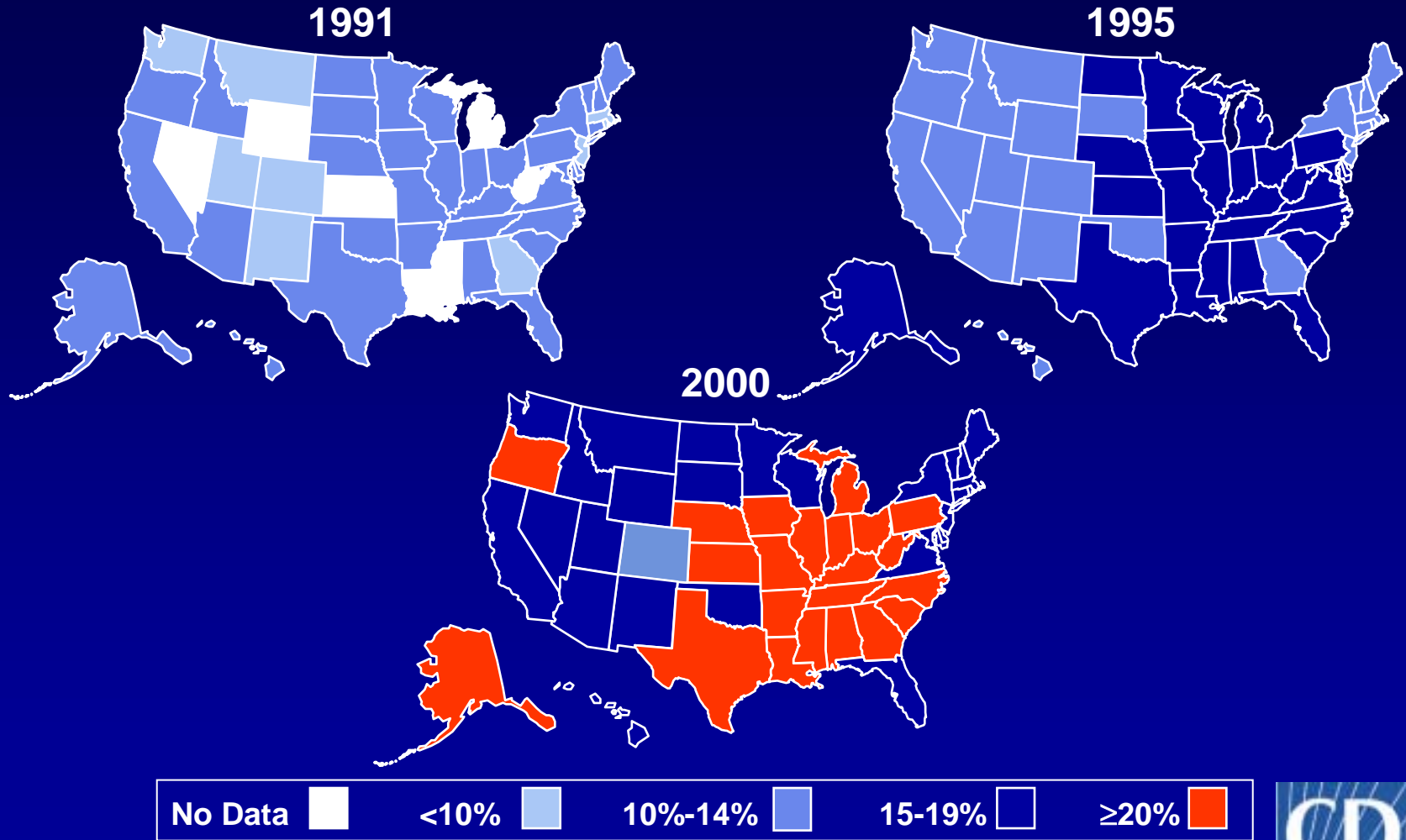
The 1999 Teen Health Survey of Seattle Public Schools

- Based on 4,265 boys and 4,400 girls in grades 9-12
- Weight data for 3,345 boys and 3,625 girls
- Overweight 7%; at risk 13%
- Highest rates among lower income groups



Obesity trends* among US adults BRFSS 1991, 1995 and 2000

(*BMI ≥ 30 , or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5'4" woman)



No Data



<10%



10%-14%



15-19%



$\geq 20\%$

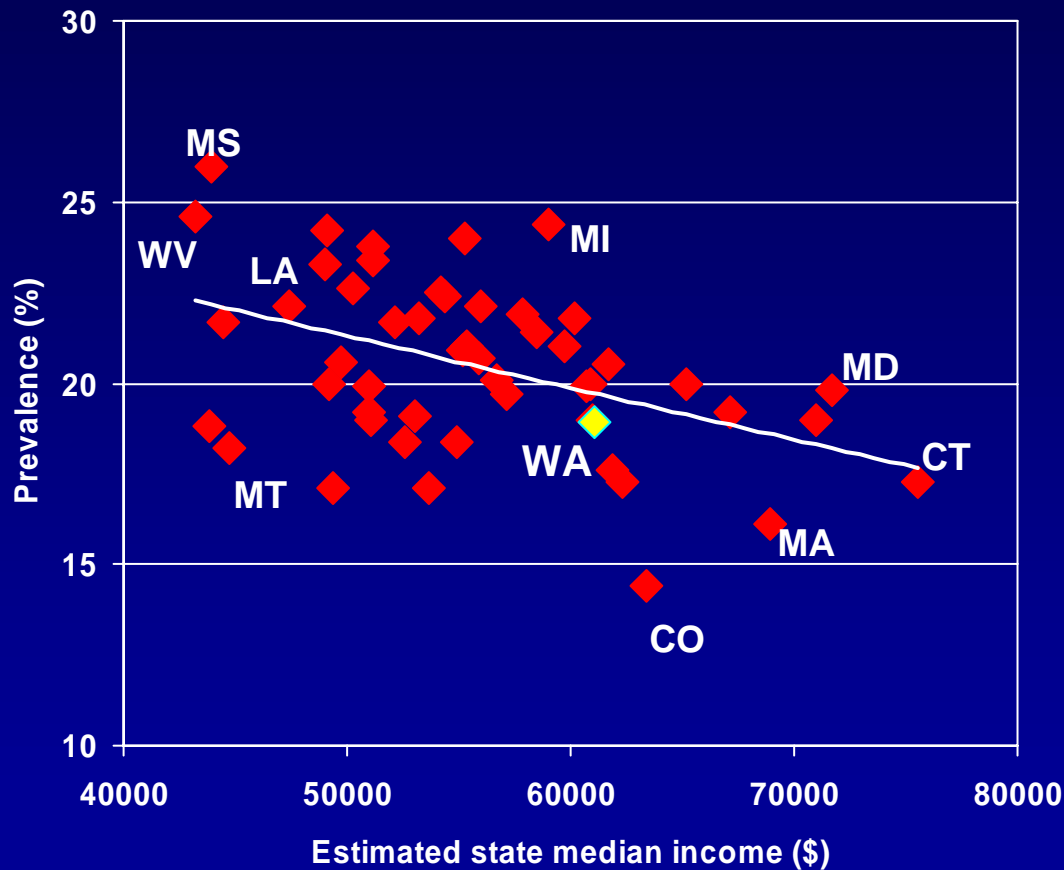


Source: Mokdad et al. *J Am Med Assoc* 1999;282:16, 2001;286:10.

WHY?



Obesity rates are linked to lower incomes: US 2001

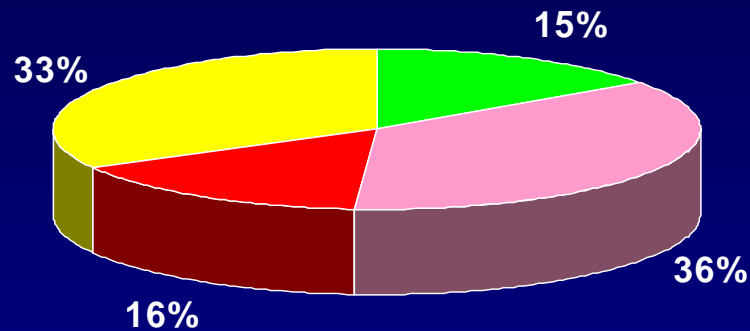


- States with lower household incomes tend to have higher obesity rates
- Poverty and obesity are also linked
- There is no mystery as to where obesity rates will rise next

Obesity trends: BRFSS (2001) data from the CDC

Estimated state median incomes for 4 person families (2001): Bureau of the Census

Added sugar and fat provide energy at a very low cost

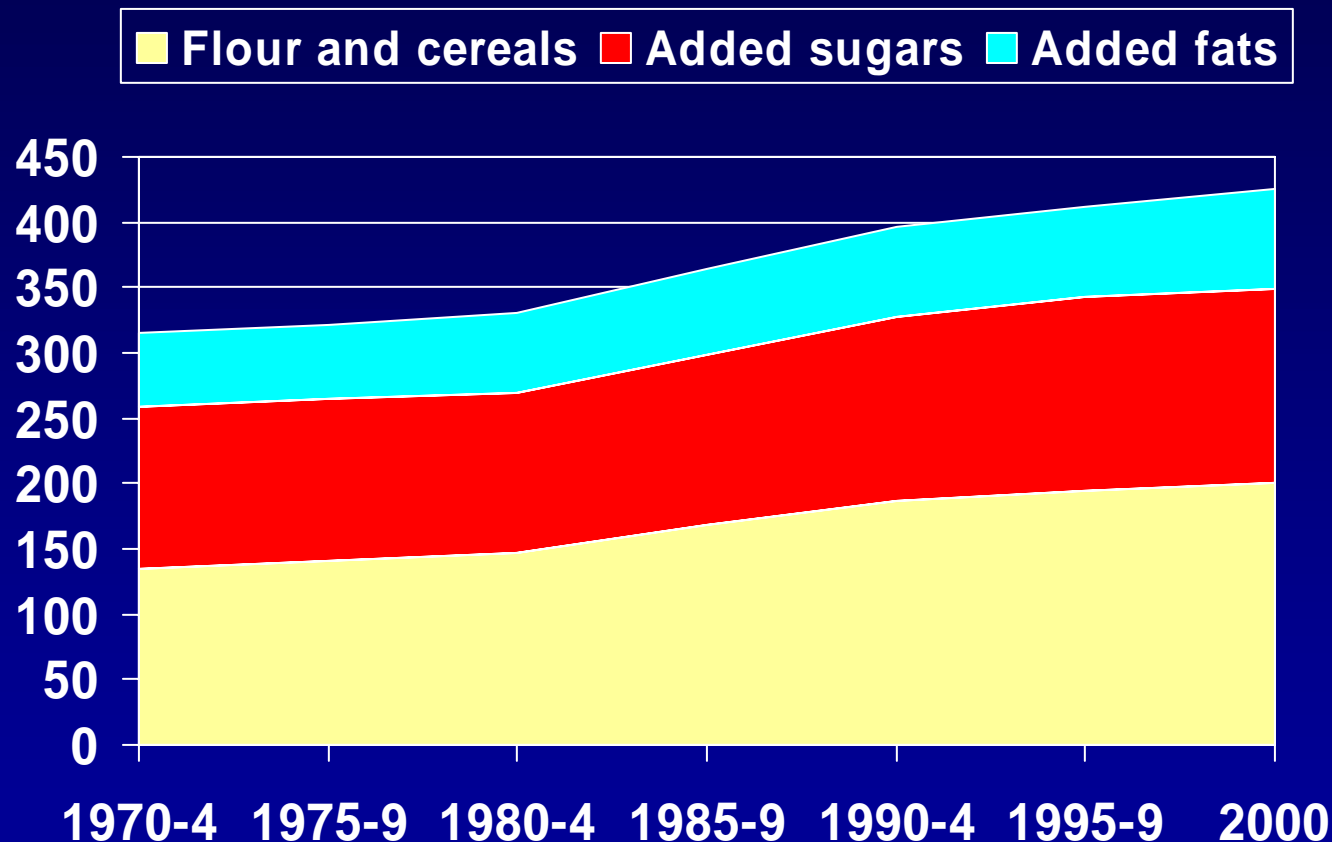


Half of the energy in the US diet is provided by added sugars and fat

■ Protein ■ Carbs ■ Added sugar ■ Fat

- Energy-dense foods provide more energy per unit volume
- Energy-dense foods taste better and cost less
- Saving on food expenditures leads to more added sugars and fat
- Added sugar and fat provide >10,000 kcal/\$

Consumption of low cost cereals, added sugars and fats has gone up (lb per capita)



Note that the major increases was in the cereals category

Source: ERS/USDA FoodReview 2002

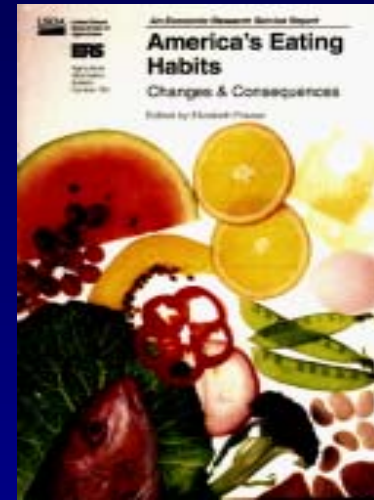
There is a lack of physical activity

- Only 22% of Americans meet guidelines for 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity most days of the week
- Cars versus bike / walk for transportation
- Hours in front of the TV
- Technological advances
- Paying to exercise



Changing lifestyles and the challenging food environment

- **Is the food environment to blame?**
 - Diets too high in energy-density
 - Diets too high in added sugars and fats
 - Too many snacks, fast foods, soft drinks
 - Expanding portion sizes in restaurants (supersizing) – *and* at home
 - Poor nutrition in schools (competitive foods, pouring contracts, vending machines)
 - Food marketing and advertising to children
 - Fewer family meals
 - No breakfast – snacking and grazing
 - Reduced milk consumption – replaced by “empty calories”



It is not always clear *who* is supposed to act

- “**Parents** need to offer their children an array of nutritious foods including whole grains, fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy products and keep to a minimum cookies, candy, and sugary soda”
~ *Letter to the NYT 2002*
- In **schools**, provide foods that are low in fat, calories and added sugars such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat dairy foods
~ *Surgeon General’s Call to Action 2001*
- Examine the marketing practices of the **fast food industry** and the factors influencing location of new outlets
~ *Surgeon General’s Call to Action 2001*
- Assess the cost of **USDA school meal programs** – do healthy school meals cost more?
~ *Economic Research Service of the USDA 2003*

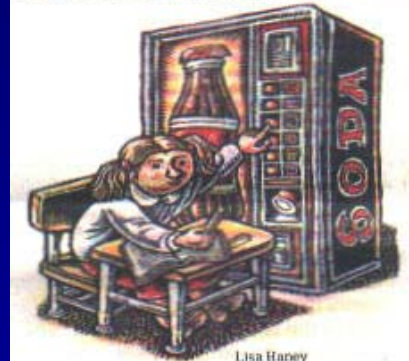
Nutritious Choices a Must

To the Editor:

Re “Schools Teach 3 C’s: Candy, Cookies and Chips” (Sept. 24): While it is critical that schools curtail or end their ties to companies selling low-nutrition foods, it is the responsibility of parents to teach their children the fourth C: choice.

Parents need to offer their children an array of nutritious foods including whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products and keep to a minimum cookies, candy and sugary soda.

But ultimately, they must allow children to choose what they consume. Fur-



thermore, as children grow, parents need to be aware of their own eating habits and model healthy behaviors they would like to see in their children.

Parents can also involve children in food shopping and meal preparation, and teach them to make healthy choices. By doing so, they may raise a more nutrition savvy generation and help prevent obesity and diseases like diabetes.

ELISA S. ZIED
New York

The writer is a dietitian.

Safe Table Forum

- The State's Perspective: Plans and Proposals for School Nutrition and Physical Activity
~ Patty Hayes
- The School's Perspective: Policies and Pressures in Local Schools
~ Gaye Lynn MacDonald
- Strategies From Other States
~ Leslie Robbins
- Group Discussion