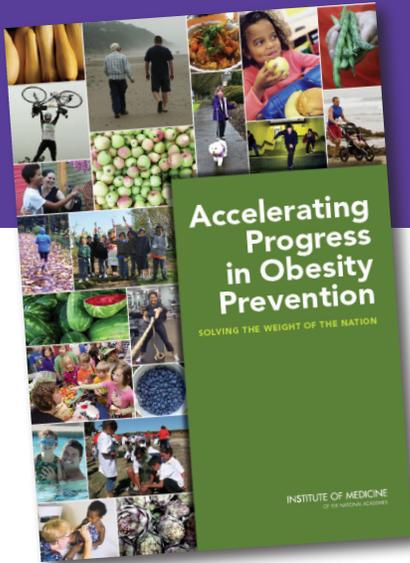


# Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention

**SOLVING THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION**

AN EXPERT REPORT FROM THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE



**The Challenges We Face:** More than one-third of adults and close to one-fifth of children and adolescents in the United States are obese. Obesity’s effects on health and health care costs could become catastrophic. While many communities are taking important steps to reduce the epidemic, accelerating progress is critical. Success requires action from all of us in the places where we live, work, learn, and play. Progress in one area will reinforce progress in others.

## Marketing What Matters for a Healthy Life

We are surrounded by messages about physical activity and food through multi-media advertising, on food packages and in restaurants, and in public service campaigns. Marketing and messages that promote healthy choices and discourage unhealthy choices could transform the message environment.

**Why should we strive to bring this vision to life?**

**Marketing strongly influences the daily food, beverage, and physical activity choices we make.**

TODAY'S REALITY	TOMORROW'S VISION
The most frequently marketed foods and beverages are high in fat, sugars, and salt.	Food and beverage companies have common marketing standards so that products marketed to children and teens are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines.
Many health-related social marketing programs are underfunded, inadequately designed and tested, or not sustained long enough to have an effect.	The federal government, with support from foundations and entertainment media, launches an effective social marketing program on physical activity and nutrition.
Consumers are confused by the many front-of-package nutrition rating systems currently in use.	A single, easily-understood front-of-package nutrition rating system is used on all foods and beverages sold in stores.
Consumers cannot easily evaluate the healthfulness of restaurant menu items.	Calorie labeling on restaurant menus is available and used.

**See the other solutions in this series:**

- Schools
- Food and Drink
- Physical Activity
- Workplaces
- Health Care

## How could this vision come to life in your community?

### FOOD INDUSTRY AND MEDIA

- Follow a set of standards for marketing foods and beverages to 2-17 year-olds, and apply them to a broad range of advertising and marketing practices.
- For restaurants, provide calorie labeling for menu items.

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- In partnership with foundations and the entertainment media, fund and oversee a nationwide, robust, and long-lasting social marketing program on physical activity and nutrition.
- Track the food and beverage marketing standards adopted by food and beverage companies, restaurants, and the media.
- Consider setting mandatory standards for marketing foods and beverages to 2-17 year-olds if a substantial majority of the food and beverage industry doesn't adopt voluntary standards within 2 years.
- Create a single nutrition labeling system for all fronts of packages and retail store shelves.
- Ensure that restaurants follow the menu labeling rules.
- Update policies for SNAP-Education and other federal programs with nutrition education components to explicitly encourage advice about foods to reduce in the diet, consistent with the Dietary Guidelines.

### FOUNDATIONS

working with Local, State and National Organizations and News Media

- Enhance the social marketing program by encouraging and supporting the news media's coverage of obesity prevention policies.

## Why should we strive to bring this vision to life?

Evidence shows that...

- Television ads influence food and beverage preferences, purchase requests, and short-term eating habits among children ages 2-11.
- Television food and beverage advertising is associated with body fatness of children ages 2-18.
- Consumers do not correctly estimate the number of calories in restaurant foods.
- Media campaigns can have a positive effect on health behaviors if they are carefully designed, well tested, fully funded, highly targeted, and last for long periods of time.

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