A Poll about Children and Weight:
Crunch Time During the American Work and School Week - 3pm to Bed

NPR
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Harvard School of Public Health

Embargoed Until February 25, 2013
# Importance and Difficulty of Eating and Exercising to Maintain or Achieve a Healthy Weight

% children whose parents say very/somewhat important that the child…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eats in a way that helps maintain or achieve a healthy weight</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises in a way that helps maintain or achieve a healthy weight</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% children whose parents say very/somewhat difficult to make sure child…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eats in a way that helps them maintain or achieve a healthy weight</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises in a way that helps them maintain or achieve a healthy weight</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons Child Consumed Foods/Drinks That Can Lead to Unhealthy Weight Gain*

- As long as child generally eats healthy foods, parent doesn’t mind if they have these foods sometimes: 79%
- Child likes the taste of this food: 73%
- I did not have time to get or prepare something different: 16%
- We haven’t had time to shop, so this was the food we had in the house: 15%
- We were going different places and it was easier to get something on the run: 14%
- It’s too expensive to get foods that don’t generally lead to unhealthy weight gain: 11%
- There were no adults watching what child ate: 7%
- I was too tired to get or make something different: 6%

*Among children whose parents said on given day between 3 PM and bed, child consumed at least some food/drinks that can lead to unhealthy weight gain (n=625)
## Reported Problems in Helping Child Maintain or Achieve a Healthy Weight (I)

### % children whose parents say each is a major/minor problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Major Problem</th>
<th>Minor Problem</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child sees a lot of advertising for foods that generally lead to unhealthy weight gain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of exercise equipment, gym memberships, or team fees for child is too high</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At lunchtime, child’s school offers a lot of foods that can lead to unhealthy weight gain*</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There aren’t good sidewalks where we live, so we often drive instead of walk</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are few places where child can spend time with friends that are not restaurants/malls serving foods that lead to unhealthy weight gain†</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions were randomized to reduce respondent burden

†Among children age 10 or older and * Among children in school so n ranges from 333 to 541 for set

Totals may not equal sum of parts due to rounding
Reported Problems in Helping Child Maintain or Achieve a Healthy Weight (II)

% children whose parents say each is a major/minor problem

- There are no stores or other places child might want to go within walking distance, so we drive to places farther away
  - Major problem: 13%
  - Minor problem: 15%
  - Total: 29%

- Stores nearby do not sell enough reasonably priced fruits/vegetables
  - Major problem: 14%
  - Minor problem: 11%
  - Total: 26%

- Foods that are low in sugar or fat at child’s school are expensive*
  - Major problem: 9%
  - Minor problem: 16%
  - Total: 25%

- There are places to buy foods that can lead to unhealthy weight gain very close to child’s school*
  - Major problem: 10%
  - Minor problem: 13%
  - Total: 23%

- There aren’t enough places nearby for child to get exercise outside where I don’t have to worry about crime
  - Major problem: 9%
  - Minor problem: 14%
  - Total: 23%

- Vending machines in child’s school have foods that can lead to unhealthy weight gain*
  - Major problem: 9%
  - Minor problem: 13%
  - Total: 22%

- There aren’t enough places nearby for child to get exercise outside that are safe from traffic
  - Major problem: 8%
  - Minor problem: 12%
  - Total: 20%

Questions were randomized to reduce respondent burden
* Among children in school so n ranges from 333 to 409 for set
Totals may not equal sum of parts due to rounding

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Perception of Child’s Weight

According to parents, % children who are…

A little overweight/Very overweight

According to parents, 14% of children are a little overweight, 1% are very overweight, and 15% are overweight/obese.

According to CDC*, % children who are…

Overweight/Obese

According to the CDC, 15% of children are overweight, 17% are obese, and 32% are overweight/obese.

*http://win.niddk.nih.gov/statistics/index.htm#b
Reported Family Dinner Rules

Among children who ate with family at home…

% children who parents say were…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required to eat everything on plate</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits on types of foods/drinks</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limits on amounts of foods/drinks</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=674

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Attitudes about Foods/Drinks That Commonly Lead to Unhealthy Weight Gain† Served at Family Events

Among those who say that in the past year their child has attended family events where there were foods/drinks that can lead to unhealthy weight gain, % children whose parents say…

When our family celebrates, it’s a time to take a break from being concerned about eating in a way that can lead to unhealthy weight gain 48%

These types of foods are an important part of our family traditions 39%

In our family, it doesn’t feel like a celebration unless we have these types of foods 32%

Having these types of foods is an important way we show affection in our family 27%

†Foods described as those with “high fat or sugar content, like chips, fried foods, fast foods or sweets”

Each question asked of random selection of respondents who qualify to reduce respondent fatigue, n=715-747

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