

# **What Can You Do?**

## **Small Steps Can Make A Big Difference**

### **Individuals**

- Eat reasonable food and beverage portion sizes at home and when eating out.
- Eat 5 to 9 fruits and vegetables each day.
- Walk or bicycle more often -- to work or school, for errands, to visit friends, just for the fun of it.
- Be a better driver – obey the speed limit, stop for pedestrians crossing the street, watch out for bicyclists.

### **Parents**

- Serve as good role models by practicing healthy eating habits and by being physical active every day.
- Make sure tasty, attractive fruits and vegetables are available for meals and snacks at home and when eating out.
- Set limits on television viewing.
- Limit access to sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Work with your children’s schools to develop policies regarding: vending machines, use of foods as rewards in classrooms, adequate lunch and recess time, daily PE, safe walking and bicycling routes to school.
- Organize Walk to School Day events in your children’s schools.
- Breastfeed your infant for at least one year.

### **Employers**

- Offer walk/bike/transit incentives like bicycle parking and transit passes.
- Provide exercise and changing facilities at work.
- Post signs near elevators encouraging people to take the stairs.
- Make the stairway a safe and inviting place.
- Support community-wide events that promote physical activity.
- Set standards for foods served at cafeterias, in vending machines, and at meetings.
- Use price incentives in the cafeteria and in vending machines to increase consumption of healthy foods.
- Promote 5 A Day at your worksite.
- Add more water drinking fountains.
- Create a worksite environment supportive of breastfeeding.

### **Community Member**

- Participate in neighborhood, community, and transportation planning groups.
- Support funding for sidewalks, bicycle paths, parks, recreation centers, and swimming pools.
- Declare and organize an annual National “No-TV” Week.
- Join or start a walking or bicycling group in your neighborhood.
- Organize a Farmers’ Market in your neighborhood or community.

- Support policies to promote healthy eating such as disclosing the calorie content of restaurant food and requiring calorie labeling on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants.
- Join advocacy groups promoting community design supportive of safe and accessible walking and bicycling.
- Let your community leaders and elected officials know that you support healthy, active communities.

### **Architects, Community and Transportation Planners**

- Design buildings where stairs are visible, accessible and safe.
- Adjacent to buildings, provide sidewalks, convenient bicycle parking and safe connectivity to public transit.
- Consider public transit, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle paths for walking and bicycling to be as essential as streets and roads for vehicles.
- Design frequent and safe street crossings.
- Design neighborhoods and communities where children and adults can easily and safely travel between home, work, school, retail establishments, parks and recreation facilities on foot and bicycle.

### **Community Leaders and Policy Makers**

- Consider health consequences along with financial impact when developing school policies such as contracts with soft-drink companies, offering daily PE, promoting walking and bicycling to school, or district support for school meal programs.
- Prioritize funding for increasing and improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities in communities.
- Consider public health impacts in land-use planning decisions such as siting of schools, development of mixed-use neighborhoods, and location of farms producing fruits and vegetables near urban areas.
- Consider zoning regulations that allow more Farmers' Markets in neighborhoods.
- Assure access to full-service grocery stores in all neighborhoods and limit density of fast food restaurants.
- Prioritize funding for effective public health interventions to increase physical activity, promote healthy eating, and reduce obesity and chronic diseases.

*“Many people believe that overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility. To some degree they are right, but it is also a community responsibility. When there are no safe, accessible places for children to play or adults to walk, jog, or ride a bike, that is a community responsibility. When school lunchrooms and office cafeterias do not provide healthy and appealing food choices, that is a community responsibility. When new or expectant mothers are not educated about the benefits of breastfeeds, that is a community responsibility. When we do not require daily physical education in our schools, that is also a community responsibility. There is much that we can and should do together.” –*

*David Satcher, The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity,” 2001.*