

[IMAGE]

Trends in Teenage Eating Habits: The News Isn't Good

Excessive weight gain during childhood is associated with adult onset diabetes, adolescent and adult high blood pressure, and adult cardiovascular disease. Inadequate consumption of healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables, can also contribute to vitamin and mineral deficiencies and increase the risk for numerous disorders, including several forms of cancer.

Too many children aren't getting enough fruits and vegetables in their daily diet, but they are eating plenty of chips, fries, candy, soft drinks and other non-nutritive, high-calorie snack foods. A recent study analyzed data from four U.S. Department of Agriculture national surveys (12,498 teenagers) and noted several disturbing trends in eating habits:

- A higher percentage of energy from fat than present dietary guidelines recommend;
- increased consumption of higher-fat potato dishes and mixed dishes (pizza, macaroni and cheese, etc.);
- inadequate fiber, raw fruit and vegetable (non-potato) consumption;
- decreased milk consumption (low-fat replaced by high-fat); and
- a substantial increase in consumption of soft drinks and non-citrus juices/drinks.

If you're a parent, teach your children the essentials of proper nutrition and the negative impact poor diet can have on their future health and wellness.

Reference:

Cavadini C, Siega-Riz AM, Popkin BM. U.S. adolescent food intake trends from 1965 to 1996. *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2000; Vol. 83, pp18-24.

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