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www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention

Nutrition

Among Colorado's Youth

The Issue

In the United States today, more than 9 million children are overweight. The majority of these kids – as many as 80% – will become obese adults, and will be at higher risk for some of today's deadliest diseases: heart disease, stroke and diabetes.¹ These children won't have to wait until they are adults to experience the burden of overweight. Many will have health problems as children and adolescents that include depression, anxiety and social isolation – problems that may ultimately affect their performance in school.

Facts about Youth Nutrition in Colorado

Source: 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

- **10%** of high school students are overweight.
- **10%** are at risk for becoming overweight.
- **41%** are trying to lose weight.
- **37%** ate less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight during the past 30 days.
- **9%** went without eating for 24 hours or more to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight during the past 30 days.
- **5%** took diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor's advice to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight during the past 30 days.
- **19%** ate five or more servings per day of fruits and vegetables during the past seven days.
- **19%** drank three or more glasses per day of milk during the past seven days.

Nutrition and Coordinated School Health

- Poor nutrition decreases cognitive functioning and performance in the areas of language, concentration and attention.
- Students who eat breakfast perform better on standardized tests.
- There is a 20 percent increase in Type 2 diabetes among school-aged youth.
- Students who regularly attend school breakfast programs perform better; have fewer psychosocial symptoms, less hyperactivity and better daily attendance.

For more information on the link between health and learning, see the Summary of Selected Evidence-Based Research from "Healthy Kids Learn Better" and "Making the Connection: Health and Student Achievement" at www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/results.htm.

What You Can Do

Use state, local and national youth risk behavior data to make a case for:

- creating a school health team in every school building
- coordinating messages, activities, programs and funding for healthy students and safe schools.
- providing opportunities for physical activity and healthy food choices throughout the school day

Resources

For complete Colorado YRBS data, visit www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/index.htm. For national YRBS data, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5505.pdf.

1. www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_consequences.htm