

# Nutrition 101

Business



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

As Americans it seems everywhere we go we are bombarded with unhealthy food options.

From the growing number of fast food chains to the processed packaged goods that fill our supermarkets, it is no wonder that the United States was given the title of fattest country out of the thirty-three with advanced economies (Hellmich, Nanci). The CDC states that approximately thirty-four percent of our nation's citizens ages twenty-one and older are currently obese, that is over one third of all American adults that need to lose weight ("Overweight and Obesity"). Another startling statistic was revealed in a study done by John's Hopkins University, unveiling that if Americans continue to eat as they do and the percentage of overweight people continues to rise as it has been for the past three decades, by 2030 nearly ninety percent of our nation's population will be overweight (Liang, Lan). Weighing more than your recommended weight can cause serious health problems, many of which are chronic and some even fatal. We need to take action immediately before these predictions become a reality for even more Americans. There is a serious lack of knowledge among United States citizens when it comes to proper nutrition.

If people were to become more aware of the harmful effects of their negative food choices and the ways in which to make healthy ones, we would begin to see these high percentages decline rapidly. Having the ability to make educated diet choices is an important life skill just like any other, so why aren't we teaching it in our schools and informing our population at a young age? If we were to instate nutritional classes into the graduation requirements for high school students, in which students learned about the

<https://assignbuster.com/nutrition-101/>

harmful effects of being overweight and the importance of proper nutrition, they could begin to make educated food choices and our nation could finally take a step in the right direction towards solving our growing obesity problem. To begin with, a nutrition class would inform students about the negative and sometimes even deadly effects of bad nutrition. Being overweight puts you at a much higher risk for a multitude of different illnesses and health conditions. Some of the more common health problems include coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, reproductive problems, sleep apnea, gallstones, type two diabetes, breathing difficulties, and even some types of cancer.

Coronary heart disease is one of the most serious conditions caused by obesity, in which plaque, made up of fat and cholesterol, builds up in the arteries around your heart, slowing blood flow, which can lead to chest pain and eventually heart attack. Another heart problem stemming from obesity is high blood pressure, which can also develop into coronary heart disease. Diabetes, the leading cause of premature death, is caused by above normal blood sugar levels. In this case the body does not use the hormone insulin properly; it begins by making too much but soon insulin production slows until it cannot make the amount that our bodies need to survive. In women, being overweight can cause irregular periods and sometimes even infertility. Obesity can also put one at a higher risk for contracting breast, gallbladder, and colon cancers (“ What are Overweight and Obesity?”).

Most people don't realize that our weight plays such a huge role in nearly all of our bodily functions. A nutrition class would educate young people about the countless problems caused by unhealthy eating habits and ways in which

<https://assignbuster.com/nutrition-101/>

to prevent them. The United State's adult population, in general, is certainly undereducated when it comes to healthy eating. If our parents are lacking education, how can we expect our kids to know any differently? This type of chain effect is what got our nation into the hot water it is in today but we can put a stop to it by getting our country educated. Just as physical education classes are mandatory for graduation, nutrition classes should be as well.

One topic a basic nutrition class would be educating students on is the recommended daily intake of the five food groups. The USDA's food pyramid is a great basis for your individual nutritional needs. It is composed of five separate different colored food groups including grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, and protein rich foods such as meat, poultry, beans, and nuts. Each individual can create their own personalized pyramid on the USDA's website. From here one enters their age, weight, and height and the program makes a pyramid based on their own unique needs ("Daily Food Needs").

Due to the fact that most teens have no idea what the recommended intake of each of these groups really is, they do not have the balanced diet they need. In general teenagers should be eating at least five fruits and vegetable servings a day, a carbohydrate with every meal, two servings of protein daily, and one small serving of heart healthy fats; however, today's teenagers tend to bulk up on the fatty carbohydrates and skimp on the lean protein, fruits, and vegetables (Francis, Mandy). This type of unbalanced diet is not beneficial to a child's body, which is still developing. Nutrition classes would not only educated students about the healthy intake of calories, carbohydrates, proteins, fats, etc, but also about why we must balance our meals to stay fit and how exactly these foods are categorized into the groups <https://assignbuster.com/nutrition-101/>

they are in. Then once the students understand what they need daily in order to maintain a healthy weight, they would be able to spot the unhealthy food choices and begin to make smarter decisions through reading the nutritional information on the food labels.

In the book "Preventing Childhood Obesity" written by the Committee on Preventing Obesity in Youth at the Institute of Medicine, not only do the authors suggest nutritional education in schools but also a change in the cafeteria food offered to students. The committee claims that this would help students learn how to properly balance meals on their own by giving them a wider variety of healthy options to choose from at school (Institute on Medicine, Committee on Preventing Obesity in Youth). School is where our kids spend six hours of their day, five days a week, educating them here on proper nutrition could really impact their overall health. Through nutritional education in schools we could spread the healthy word of good nutrition much farther than just to the students. The helpful information kids would be learning in these classes would then be taken home and shared with their families and friends as well, creating a type of "trickle down effect."

"The healthy lifestyle tips learned at school have the potential to reach a lot of people through these means. The support of the family involvement would also help keep students on track to maintain their healthy habits. A study done by the Western Psychiatric Institute at the University of Pittsburgh showed that people trying to lose weight who did so with the support of a group of at least three family members, rather than on their own, were seventy six percent more likely to reach their goal weight (Wing, Jeffery). Not only would family involvement help in losing weight, but also in living a

<https://assignbuster.com/nutrition-101/>

healthier lifestyle in general. Therefore, if the whole family is dedicated to getting fit and improving their health and nutrition together, then they are more likely to see positive results. It is clear that something must be done about the obesity epidemic we are currently dealing with in our country but most people just don't know where to start.

Establishing nutritional education classes in our schools would be a great way to get the word out to American citizens and help educate our next generation early on about how to be healthy. In such classes, students would learn about the side effects of unhealthy eating and obesity, how to balance meals and read labels correctly, and the importance of a healthy and supportive environment. This useful information has the potential to reach a large group of people through students sharing what they have learned in class with friends and family members outside of school as well. Ninety-five percent of American high schools require physical education classes in order for a student to graduate, however, only sixteen percent of all high schools in our country offer students classes specifically on nutritional education (“School Health Policies and Programs of Study”). Because physical activity is only half the battle when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, students are missing out on the opportunity to learn about the importance of putting good foods into their bodies each day. Proper nutrition is something that has been taken lightly among American citizens for far too long and the rising obesity levels are beginning to reflect this nonchalant attitude.

However, nutrition is not an insignificant topic, it is a matter of life and death. Nutrition classes may be just what the U. S. needs to finally educate

our citizens and help get our nation healthy once more. Works Cited “ Daily Food Plans.

” United States Department of Agriculture. USDA, 09 Feb 2011. <http://www.mypyramid.gov> Francis, Mandy.

Raising a Healthier Eater: How to Help Your Kids Develop a Taste for Good Nutrition. New York: Perigee, 2007. Print Hellmich, Nanci. “ USA is Fattest of 33 Countries.” USA Today, 24 Sep 2010. Web.

28 April 2011. Institute on Medicine, Committee on Preventing Obesity in Youth. Preventing Childhood Obesity Washington, D. C.: Academics Press, 2005.

237-238. E-book. Liang, Lan. “ Study Suggests Eighty-Six Percent of Americans Could be Overweight by 2030.” Public Health News Center. John’s Hopkins School of Public Health, 01 June 2008.

Web. 18 April 2011. “ Obesity and Overweight.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC, 18 June 2010. Web.

1 May 2011. “ School Health Policies and Prams of Study.” Physical Education. Centers for Disease Control, 08 Oct 2010. Web. 1 May 2011.

“ What are Overweight and Obesity?”. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. National Institute of Health, 02 Nov 2010. Web. 28 April 2011. Wing, Jeffery.

“ Benefits of Recruiting Participants with Friends and Increased Social Support for Weight Loss.” U. S. National Library of Medicine (2009): 63-34. Web. 14 April 2011.