Can food monitoring and accessible healthy food help combat child obesity?

[Health & Medicine](#), [Childhood Obesity](#)

Child obesity is becoming a commonplace thing in America, with this epidemic affecting millions of children. With obesity being seen in younger and younger children, we may be raising children with shorter life spans. Physically, obesity causes many health risks, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol and joint problems. However, it doesn't stop there. Obesity can also affect a child psychologically, causing self-esteem issues. At such a crucial time of development, we can't allow this trend to continue. By making healthy foods more accessible and making school lunches healthier, we can help decrease obesity rates by first starting in our community.

Childhood obesity is a serious problem and one that doesn't seem to be going away anytime soon. According to The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, being obese can cause many immediate health effects. An obese child is more at risk for cardiovascular diseases, like high cholesterol and high blood pressure. There are also many long term effects, like a greater risk for heart attacks and cancer. Children dealing with this issue can't rely on school; school lunch is often unappealing and unhealthy and vending machines don't provide any other healthier options. As stated by Matthew Williams, " Federal regulations limit fat to 30 percent of lunch calories, but hundreds of school districts have fed children fattening, salty and nutritionally deficient meals and face infrequent oversight. A CIR analysis shows 60 percent of the school lunches reviewed by the state in the past five years failed to meet at least one federal nutritional requirement". Eating out is another struggle, since ingredients and calories aren't listed on menus. On top of that, stores that promote healthier options are often further and more

expensive than a corner store. As stated in a study at Harvard, " The healthiest diets cost about $1. 50 more per day than the least healthy diets, according to new research from Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH)." A long and difficult road has gotten even longer and more difficult.

Being in a community means that you can rely on each other and this is no different. As stated in Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, " There are many different programs and policies that can contribute towards the creation of healthy community food environments. These include providing incentives for supermarkets or farmers markets to establish their businesses in underserved areas, placing nutrition and calorie content on restaurant and fast food menus, and implementing and supporting nutrition standards for childcare, schools, hospitals, and worksites." By making healthy foods closer and more available, we can get rid of temptations. Also, having more prevention programs can help put an early stop to childhood obesity. It is said best by Sara Bleich " The research shows that in order to help prevent obesity among children, we must focus on both diet and exercise in the communities where children live and go to school since the environment is a key contributor to obesity risk. Focusing on the community is especially important for children since they generally have little or no control over their environment."

By taking these actions, we are fighting a worthy cause. Each child that manages to get to a normal weight is a child that will have a longer, happier life. By learning how to live a healthy lifestyle, children can pass tips onto others. This lifestyle change doesn't have to be restricted to schools.

Students can pass on the information they learn to their friends and family members. By word of mouth, we can have the whole community become a community that promotes health. These healthy habits can bring on a new generation of healthy, happy children.

Childhood obesity has become a national epidemic. It's reaches don't stop in our neighborhood. To combat this epidemic, we can make school lunches healthier and have restaurants post the ingredients and calories of meals. Also, we can make supermarkets to promote healthy foods be closer. By taking these actions, we can combat unhealthy eating and cut obesity rates.