The Guide to Community Preventive Services

The Guide to Community Preventive Services (The Community Guide) is an essential resource for people who want to know what works in public health. It provides evidence-based findings about public health interventions and policies to improve health and promote safety. It contains the findings of the Community Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force – an independent, nonfederal, unpaid body of public health and prevention experts – bases its findings on systematic reviews of the scientific literature. With oversight from the Task Force, scientists and subject-matter experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conduct these reviews in collaboration with a wide range of government, academic, policy and practice-based partners.

The Community Guide can be used in a number of ways, including to:

- **Develop public policy** – Identify evidence-based policies to help draft legislation; justify funding proposals; support policies and legislation that promote health
- **Plan programs and services** – Select evidence-based interventions to address health needs and objectives
- **Allocate resources** – Determine which interventions optimize use of limited resources
- **Inform surveillance** – Develop surveillance and research agendas and funding announcements
- **Educate health professionals** – Educate about evidence-based public health interventions

Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is a common, growing and serious problem plaguing our country today. It affects not only the individual, but families, communities and the wellbeing of our nation. For the first time in history, nearly 1 in 3 (31.7%) children and adolescents are overweight or obese. Obesity is associated with significant health risks in children including hypertension, asthma, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, and depression, and is an important risk factor for much adult morbidity and mortality. The Community Guide offers evidence for childhood obesity interventions in the areas of promoting physical activity, eating healthier, reducing screen-time, and using technology-supported interventions.
Topics in *The Community Guide Relevant to Childhood Obesity*

Promoting Physical Activity
Regular physical activity can provide several health benefits for youth, including reduced risk of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression, anxiety and stress. The Task Force recommends:

* Community-wide campaigns to increase physical activity. These large-scale campaigns deliver messages that promote physical activity by using television, radio, newspaper columns and inserts, and trailers in movie theaters. They involve many community sectors and include components such as social support, health screening and health education.

* Individually adapted health behavior change programs. These interventions are tailored to the individual’s specific interests, preferences, and readiness for change. Participants learn the behavioral skills needed to incorporate moderate physical activity into daily routines.

* Enhanced school-based physical education. These interventions enhance physical education (PE) curricula by making classes longer or having students be more active during class in order to increase the amount of time students spend doing moderate or vigorous activity in PE class.

* Environmental and Policy Approaches. These approaches are designed provide opportunities, support, and cues to help people be more physically active. This includes: community-scale urban design and land use policies; street-scale urban design and land use policies; and creating or enhancing access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach activities.

Reducing Screen Time
Time spent watching television, playing computer and video games, and surfing the Internet is associated with a number of negative health behaviors and outcomes among children including overweight, irregular sleep, insufficient consumption of fruits and vegetables, and disordered eating. The Task Force recommends:

* Behavioral Interventions to Reduce Screen Time. These interventions including skills building, tips, goal setting, reinforcement techniques, workbooks, messages, TV turnoff challenges, and family support. Additionally, parents or families may be supported through provisions of information on environmental strategies to reduce access to television, video games, and computers.

Healthy Eating
Healthy eating is associated with lower risk for overweight and obesity, micronutrient deficiencies and chronic diseases, such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and certain cancers. The Task Force reviewed the following strategies:

* School-Based Nutrition Promotion Interventions. These programs are implemented in school settings to promote healthy nutritional attitudes, knowledge and behavior, including eating and physical activity among school-aged children and adolescents. Interventions may target food policy, environmental factors and/or nutrition education, and may be directed at school administrators, food service staff, teachers, parents, or directly to students. Interventions may be delivered by regular classroom teachers or by special program instructors. Additional research is needed to determine whether these interventions are always effective. If used, these interventions should be carefully evaluated.

Technology-Supported Interventions
The Task Force recommends the following types of strategies for obesity prevention and control in community settings:

* Technology-supported multi-component coaching or counseling interventions to reduce weight and maintain weight loss: These interventions use technology such as pedometers or computer programs with other tools to facilitate weight-related behaviors or weight-related outcomes.

Sources and Selected Resources for Additional Information:


* CDC Resources for Obesity Prevention: [http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/resources/recommendations.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/resources/recommendations.html)

