The Obesity Conundrum: Is there a Food Solution?

Freedom to React!

Van S. Hubbard, M.D., Ph.D.
CAPT, USPHS
Director, NIH Division of Nutrition
Research Coordination
Obesity in the US

- Nearly two thirds of US adults are overweight (BMI $\geq 25$), and over 30% are obese (BMI $\geq 30$)
- 300,000 deaths per year due to poor diet/inactivity
- $117$ billion/year in economic costs (2000 data)
- *Obesity is also a problem in the World*
Obesity is a Chronic Disease

- Adverse health effects are part of a continuum
- Time-limited treatments are rarely effective
- Multiple sectors of the community impact effectiveness of prevention and intervention efforts
Prevalence of complications: men

Body Mass Index

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Gallbladder
- CHD
- High cholesterol
- High BP
- Osteoarthritis
Prevalence of complications: women

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Gallbladder
- CHD
- High cholesterol
- High BP
- Osteoarthritis

Weights:
- 18.5-24.9
- 25-29.9
- 30-34.9
- 35-39.9
- 40+
HealthierUS
The Four Pillars

• Be physically active daily
• Eat a nutritious diet
• Get preventive screenings
• Make healthy choices and avoid risky behaviors
“Overweight and obesity… have reached epidemic proportions in the United States… Left unabated, overweight and obesity may soon cause as much preventable disease and death as cigarette smoking”

- David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D.
Realities

- There is a finite limit of financial and human resources
- Consequently, interactions across Agencies and other organizations are imperative in order to enhance our investments
How Can Food and the Food Industry Be Part of the Response?

- **Influence other sectors of the community**
  - Innovative programs within your own work place
  - Encourage other businesses to support opportunities for lifestyle change

- **Help with appropriate communications**
  - Provide assistance in appropriate translation of research findings
  - Share marketing expertise to help the public understand that all approaches do not work for all people
To solve the obesity epidemic, we need to emphasize the role of partnering in the implementation of Individual, Community, and National Strategies and providing added value.
Who should be involved?

- Schools
- Businesses
- Health care organizations
- Media
- Families
- Communities
- Governments
- You
Culture

- Perceptions of body image
- Choice of foods
- How we handle life changes
- Perceptions of illness
- We must understand our own before we can understand someone else’s
Our ultimate goal is to prevent disease and disability.

Research Is Key to Success
Factors influencing your involvement and willingness to adopt lifestyle modification

- Desire and Readiness
- Support mechanisms
- Time
Time: A barrier to lifestyle modification?
Multidimensional Effect of Time

- Time Constraints
- Time Allocation
- Impact of time constraints on time allocation
Time Pressure/Constraints

- Real or Perceived?
- Increased stress or stress reduction?
Time Allocation

- Are our concerns with time more related to our priority setting?

- Challenges
  - How do we elevate healthful eating and increased physical activity in people’s lives?
  - ……..especially in the complex lives of the poor and minorities?
Impact of time constraints on time allocation

- **Limited time, strength of other demands determine priority setting**
  - **Schools**
    - More emphasis on traditional academic courses, even when health improvement courses offered there is a lack of incorporation of healthy lifestyle principles in other areas of the school
  
  - **Workplace**
    - Increased labor saving devices have not translated into healthier work environments
  
  - **Healthcare**
    - Trend toward capitated reimbursement leads to emphasis on increased volume and decreased time which results in time being spent on directly reimbursed activities.
Time Access

- Differential in access to time utilization as a function of social class, etc
  - Number of work hours
  - Longer commutes
  - Single parenting
  - Multiple family members in the work force
Summary

- Life-long modification of behaviors will be needed
- Prevention is the ultimate goal for those who are not overweight
- Improvement in health risk is the goal for all
- Everyone needs to become a Partner
Let us all strive to make a difference
Thank you for listening