



Taxing Unhealthy Foods May Encourage Healthier Eating Habits

ScienceDaily (Feb. 25, 2010) — Recently, the Obama administration called for a total ban on candy and soda in the nation's schools. States are beginning to impose "sin taxes" on fat and sugar to dissuade people from eating junk food. Pricing strategies may well be a key to changing behavior, but others favor subsidies over punitive taxes, as a way to encourage people to eat fruits and vegetables and whole grains. The thought is that if you make it cheaper, people will eat more of it, more expensive and people will eat less.

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Total Fat, Trans Fat Linked to Higher Incidence of Ischemic Stroke

ScienceDaily (Feb. 25, 2010) — Post-menopausal women who reported consuming the most daily dietary fat had a 40 percent higher incidence of clot-caused strokes compared to women who ate the least amount, according to research presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2010.

The incidence of ischemic stroke also increased by 30 percent in the quartile of women consuming the highest daily amount of trans fat (average intake 7 grams per day) compared to those who consumed the least (average 1 gram/day). Two common sources of trans fat are processed foods and fried foods.

Ischemic strokes are caused by blockages in blood vessels in or leading to the brain.

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Physical Activity in Schools Can Improve Children's Fitness

ScienceDaily (Feb. 23, 2010) — A structured physical activity program at school can improve children's fitness and decrease body fat, a study published online in the British Medical Journal shows.

Researchers in Switzerland studied 540 seven and 11-year-olds in 15 schools. Over nine months, pupils randomly allocated to an intervention group underwent a physical activity program designed by experts. This involved structuring their existing three physical education lessons and adding two extra lessons a week. They were also given daily short activity breaks and physical activity homework. Pupils randomly allocated to a control group continued to receive their existing three lessons only.

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UNC study: Obese 3-year-olds show early warning signs for future heart disease

CHAPEL HILL – A study by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill researchers found that obese children as young as 3 years old have elevated levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation that in adults is considered an early warning sign for possible future heart disease.

In addition, the study found elevated levels of two other inflammatory markers – the ratio of ferritin/transferrin saturation (F/T) and the absolute neutrophil count (ANC) – in obese children. Elevated F/T levels started at age 6 and elevated ANC levels were found starting at age 9.

"These findings were a surprise to us," said lead author Asheley Cockrell Skinner, Ph.D., an assistant professor of pediatrics in the UNC School of Medicine. "We're seeing a relationship between weight status and elevated inflammatory markers much earlier than we expected."

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Childhood obesity prevention should begin early in life, possibly before birth

BOSTON, Mass. (March 1, 2010)—Efforts to prevent childhood obesity should begin far earlier than currently thought—perhaps even before birth—especially for minority children, according to a new study that tracked 1,826 women from pregnancy through their children's first five years of life.

Most obesity prevention programs—including the national initiative recently launched by First Lady Michelle Obama—target kids age 8 and older.

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Weed and Seed workouts, diet changes paying off

Chattanooga- Sandra Hines is an overweight diabetic who's planning to improve her health with diet and exercise.

"It's going to take awhile," she said. "But I'm in this for the long haul."

The 54-year-old Cigna data entry team leader is among more than 70 people participating in the East Chattanooga Weed and Seed's wellness program. Participants recently celebrated their progress toward better health at Memorial Hospital.

After exercising two nights a week for three months at Carver Recreation Center, Mrs. Hines is called the group's biggest loser because she's the most weight in the class -- 15 pounds.

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