

**Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D.**  
**Commissioner**  
**Department of Health and**  
**Senior Services**

# A Healthy Future For NJ's Kids



Obesity & Child Well-Being  
New America Foundation, U.S. Capitol  
Thursday, October 4, 2007

# Preventable Public Health Crisis:

- Two biggest threats to the lifelong health & well-being of our youth:

- Obesity

- Smoking

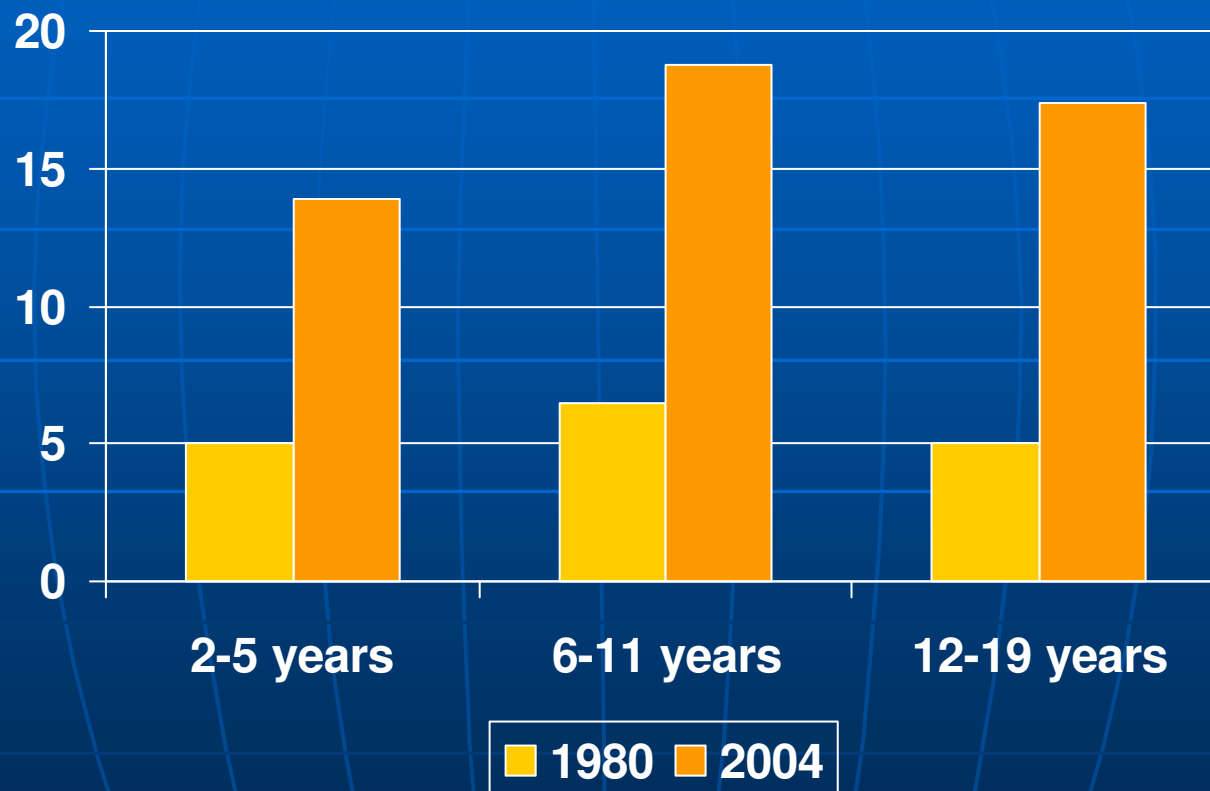


Top two preventable causes of illness, disability & death in U.S.

# Calories In/Calories Out

- **Body Mass Index:  $\text{Weight} \div \text{Height}^2$** 
  - Adults: Overweight BMI 25-30
  - Obese BMI > 30
  - Youth: BMI: Percentile based on Age, Sex
- **Overweight = Caloric imbalance:**
  - Too few calories expended for amount consumed
  - Mediated by genetics & body composition
  - Social networking (New England Journal of Medicine)

# Prevalence of Overweight: Children and Teens

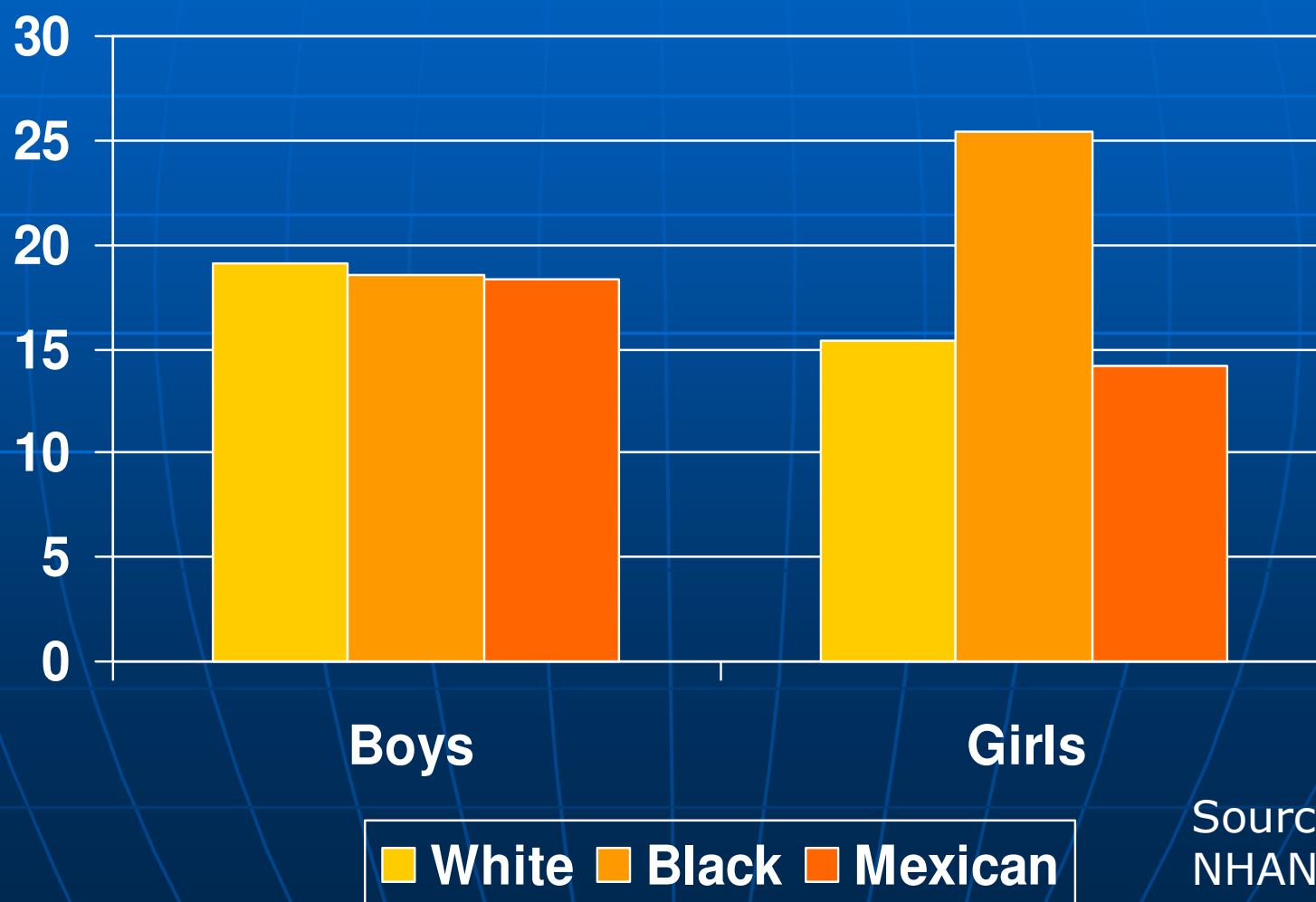


Source: National Health & Nutrition Examination Survey, CDC

# Minority & Multicultural Groups:

- Low-income, new immigrants, blacks, Hispanics & other racial/ethnic groups have disproportionately higher rates of obesity
- Obesity compounded by other health disparities: Asthma, diabetes, uninsured, lack of access to primary & preventive care
- Access to farmers markets & safe bikeways & parks are limited in some urban areas

# Overweight by race and ethnicity, 12-19 years, 2003/4



# Lifelong Medical Consequences

- Heart Disease caused by:
  - High blood pressure
  - High Cholesterol
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Cancer
- Asthma
- Sleep Apnea
- Overweight teens more likely to be obese adults

# Economic Consequences

- Obesity-related medical conditions cost the nation \$75 billion a year in health care costs (CDC)
- NJ share: \$2.3 billion (CDC)
- Taxpayers pay half those costs through Medicare & Medicaid (CDC)
- Lost Productivity

# Psychological Consequences

- Obesity: Physical & Psychological disorder
- Obese kids subjected to taunts, bullying & isolation by peers, parents & other family members are substantially more prone to suicidal thoughts, eating disorders & high blood pressure

*—Review of 100 studies over 40 years by Yale clinical psychologist Rebecca Puhl & a colleague from U. of Hawaii*

# Fast Food Nation:

- 5.8 million eat fast food daily
- Frequent dining out = large portions high-calorie, high fat, low cost “fast foods”
- Overscheduled kids/ on-the-go meals
- Order online & “drive-thru” pickup
- Take-out in chain restaurants
- Access to fast food easier & cheaper than fresh fruit & vegetables
- Sedentary lifestyle

# You Are What You *Drink*:

- Huge increase in sugar-sweetened drinks at expense of milk, a source of calcium, protein & Vitamin D
- Calories from sugary drinks account for 50% rise in calories since late 70s
- 1/5<sup>th</sup> of calories consumed over age 2 are from sodas & sugary fruit drinks

# National Consensus on 5 Key Interventions

- Improve nutrition
- Increase fruits & vegetables
- Promote breastfeeding
- Increase physical activity
- Limit TV/computers/video games

# NJ Efforts to Combat Obesity

- **DOT:** \$74 million Pedestrian Safety Initiative helping towns create safer walkways, bikeways & street crossings near schools
- **DOA:** Public schools required to implement Model Nutrition policy limiting fat & sugar
- **DOE:** Revised Core Curriculum Standards emphasize nutrition/fitness
- **State Workforce** – DHSS, DOP *Working Well* NJ public employee wellness initiative

# Model School Nutrition Policy

- As of fall 2007, all NJ public schools required to have new standards promoting fresh fruits & vegetables, low-fat milk and whole grains
- Elementary schools: Only milk, water or 100 percent fruit or vegetable juices
- Middle- and high-schools: At least 60% of drinks must 100% fruit or vegetable juices

# NJ Efforts to Combat Obesity

## Obesity Prevention Task Force Recommends

- State office to coordinate prevention
- Statewide, coordinated effort to increase prevention among government, schools, employers, health care professionals
- Public Awareness Campaign to educate students, parents, pediatricians, school nurses about the prevalence & health consequences

# Eat Less/Move More

Office of Nutrition/Fitness:

- Make the healthy choice the easy choice
- Promote Physical activity
- Coordinate \$2 million in DHSS nutrition & fitness programs
- Obesity prevention



# It Takes a Village....

- All parts of the community must work together to support healthy eating & physical activity:
  - Federal, state & local government
  - Public & private schools
  - Workplaces
  - Healthcare systems/health professionals
  - Local organizations/neighborhoods

# Restaurants Offer Healthier Menu Options:

- TGI Friday's: Right Portion; Right Price
- Ruby Tuesday, Cheesecake Factory: Smaller portion option
- McDonalds: Fruit & Yogurt Parfait, sliced apples, Fruit & Walnut salad
- Wendy's: Baked potatoes

# Fit Friendly Companies

- ...Tell your employees to take a hike. Or a jog. Or a couple of laps around their cubes...take the stairs instead of the elevator. Anything to get them active. Because companies that promote healthy habits at the office have more productive employees & save on healthcare costs.

--AHA Wall St. Journal ad listing hundreds of fit friendly companies

# We Must Turn Back the Epidemic...

*“As we look to the future and where childhood obesity will be in 20 years...it is every bit as threatening to us as is the terrorist threat we face today.”*

--U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona

# If Present Trends Continue...Obesity Will:

- Disable 22% more adults
- Confine 25% more people to nursing homes by 2020
- Result in 20% of health care spending by elderly to be for conditions related to their obesity

# If We Do Nothing....

The current generation of young people may be the first to live **shorter** and **sicker** lives than their parents

# What Americans Can Do

- **Parents:** Set an example, plan active family outings, provide & encourage healthy foods
- **Healthcare providers:** Talk to patients about BMI, offer counseling & guidance
- **Government officials/Polycymakers:** Increase physical activity options, ensure safe playgrounds and parks, increase access to farmers markets & healthier foods in local stores
- **Students:** Promote healthy lifestyles with peers, drink more water, limit soda, TV, computer time