Taking a Stand

Fight Against Childhood Obesity

Our Kids. Our School

As a parent, we can all agree on one thing: protecting our kids from harm and ensuring their well-being is our top priority. This is undisputable. From the moment, our kids come into our lives, we spend countless hours protecting them from any danger.

Cover the corner of all tables: ✅

Cover each electrical outlet: ✅

Lock all the kitchen cabinets: ✅

But there’s a greater and imminent danger that we’re clearly ignoring and it needs your attention.

Childhood obesity. In our school. Our kids.

It is a nationwide epidemic that hasn’t received much attention but it needs yours today. This is affecting your kids and it’s happening in our schools. An article published in the Lancet in 2010 points out that “every other child in the USA now has a body-mass index (BMI) at or above 85th centile on age-specific national growth charts for ideal weight gain.” This alarming rate of childhood obesity is not just happening elsewhere but it’s happening here, to our kids. Easy access to sugar-packed beverages and sodas in our schools is causing our kids to be obese and their health is being jeopardized.

Let’s step back and reflect on an event that took place not too long ago.

It’s a known fact that carcinogens and other chemicals contained inside of a cigarette has a detrimental and irreversible effect on our bodies. The tobacco companies have fought hard to dispute this fact for decades but ultimately conceded to science. We now have laws prohibiting underage kids from purchasing any tobacco products. New education programs were introduced in schools, commercials were aired on TV, radio, and other mediums to inform everyone. According to The Journal of Medical Association, we now have fewer underage smokers than ever before. (The JAMA Network, 2003) We took a stand to protect our kids and we succeeded.

Once again, we’re faced with another crisis. In the article from *Childhood obesity: affecting choices*, “children whose BMIs were in the top quartile at the mean age of 11 years were more than twice likely to die before the age of 55.” (The Lancet, 2010) So what does that mean? If your child’s body-mass index ranks higher than normal, their life expectancy can be drastically reduced. This is a shocking statistic and should cause you to start asking why.

Each morning we drop off our kids at school and believe that our kids are in good hands. Their well-being is left in the hands of administrators and academic program that guides it. The part of this academic program is a national lunch program. The original program was first introduced back in 1946 and with advance in nutrition science, it has evolved over time. In a study conducted in 2008 by The New England Journal of Medicine reveals that the kids were eating far less fruits and vegetables and consuming high amounts of refined grains. The study also shows that the kids ate 500 excess calories from solid fats and added sugar per day. That’s 3500 extra calories a week. This equates to possibility of gaining one pound of fat a week and there are 36 weeks in an academic school year. I’ll let you do the math but this is an incredible number of extra calories that our kids are consuming. In an article *The Role of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in Adolescent Obesity: A Review of Literature*, author Susan Harrington writes, “56 - 85% of children in school consume at least one soft drink daily. The odds ratio of becoming obese among children increases 1.6 times for each additional can or glass of sugar-sweetened drink consumed beyond their usual daily intake of the beverage.”



As part of the current lunch program in elementary school, kids are offered a choice of either milk or juice. Unless you grew up in a household that doesn’t offer sugar-packed juice drinks, the choice is fairly obvious. In middle school and high school, vending machines stand tall throughout the campus dispensing sodas without discrimination.

So once again, it’s time to stand up and take a stand. Just as we did against the tobacco company, we need to rise together and protect our kids. Our future. If we work together with the school administrators and board of directors, we can seek alternative solutions to sugar-packed drunks in our kid’s lunch and healthy alternatives in the vending machines. We can make a positive change for our kids. It’s time to cover the corners of tables, electrical outlets, and lock the kitchen cabinets one more time. It’s time for a change.

---------------------- Brainstorming Below (Please Ignore) ----------------------------------------

The lunch program that was introduced in #### was well intended to feed the kids. What the plan failed to recognized was what was being fed. Our kids are being fed sugar-packed beverages that are slowly making them obese and unhealthy.

The main contributing factors to childhood obesity is sugar-sweetened beverages. Recent reviews have shown evidence of these beverage consumption can have a detrimental effect on child’s body. (Harrington, 2008). So where are they getting these drinks? What does that mean? Why should you care?

Hi Molly,

Thanks for being the first brave soul to post their rough draft for peer review.

I certainly learned a lot more about heart disease and also realized I should stop some of my  behaviors that may contribute to possibly getting a heart disease.

﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿Few things I noticed.

1. I thought it was very informative and I enjoyed the flow. Looks like you did a lot of research.

2. Through out the paper, I noticed that "heart disease" was used quite a bit and at times, I felt that it was bit over used and repetitive.

3. If I'm not mistaken, the requirement was to utilize minimum of 3 sources but I only noticed 2.

The drinks are readily available to all students and considered to be part of nutrion

Our kids face it each day and its jeopardizing their well-being. So, who’s threatening our kids? School. More specifically, school cafeteria.

1. ASU Library - Childhood obesity: affecting choices (The Lancet <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60247-4/fulltext>
2. ASU Library - American Heart Journal (AHJ <http://www.ahjonline.com/article/S0002-8703(10)00888-4/abstract>
3. ASU Library - Harrington, S. (2008). The Role of Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in Adolescent Obesity: A Review of the Literature. Journal of School Nursing, 24, 3-12. <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=00efad5c-2a31-4236-95f7-da7f8f6f71d4%40sessionmgr4009>
4. ASU Library – The New England Journal of Medicine <http://www.nejm.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/doi/10.1056/NEJMp1409353>
5. The JAMA Network <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1845186>
6. The JAMA Network – Teenage Smoking Continues to Decrease <https://jamanetwork-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/journals/jama/fullarticle/195745>