



DIET AND INFLUENCES ON FOOD CHOICE

LESSON PLAN

Overview

Estimated lesson time: 125 minutes

5 min **Introduction**

Primer

Includes background reading, nutrition primer and vocabulary builders.

Lecture-discussion

Covers causes of death, essential questions and overview.

15 min **Effects of diet on health**

Lecture-discussion

Covers nutrient density, energy intake, healthy diets and risk factors for diet-related disease.

30 min **Trends in American diets**

Activity

Students will move to different stations around the classroom. Each station represents a different response to questions about how American diets have changed over recent decades.

45 min **Influences on food choice**

Brainstorm

Students will brainstorm a list of influences on food choice and group them by common themes.

Lecture-discussion

Covers individual, social and environmental influences on food choice, including food and farm policy.

Activity

Students will take a stand on which factors they believe have the greatest effect on food choice.

30 min **Improving American diets**

Lecture

Covers interventions aimed at improving American diets.

Project

Students will design their own intervention to improve eating behaviors.

Essential questions

Essential questions¹ point to the big ideas of a module. They can be discussed, written on the board and posed on essays and exams.

- Why do we eat what we eat?
- Why does it matter?
- What has led to the rise in diet-related disease in the United States?
- How can American diets be improved?

Learning objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe major changes to American diets over recent decades;
- Explain how diet can impact health;
- Identify major influences on food choice, and give specific examples of each.

Materials

Available on the *Teaching the Food System* website:

- Vocabulary definitions
- Background reading
- Presentation slides
- Student handouts

5 min Introduction

Primer

Includes background reading, nutrition primer and vocabulary builders.

Lecture-discussion

Covers causes of death, essential questions and overview.

Instructions to educators are written in italics; talking points to students are written in plain font. Talking points are not intended to be delivered verbatim—we expect educators will adapt them to best suit their audiences.

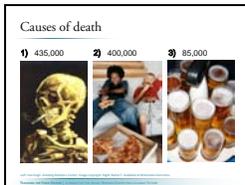
Primer

- *Educators may wish to review the **background reading** as a primer for this lesson. It can also be made available to students as an optional reading assignment, or for reference purposes.*
- *Depending on their students' level of familiarity with the subject, educators may wish to offer their students a nutrition primer before beginning this lesson. Although they are included in the vocabulary definitions, core concepts such as calories, dietary nutrients and diet-related diseases may merit additional explanation.*
- *Before beginning this lesson, we recommend students become familiar with the **vocabulary definitions** for this module. Refer to **vocabulary builders** for suggested activities.*

Lecture-discussion



Title slide



Causes of death (4 slides)

- *This is intended to “hook” the audience.*
- What behaviors were among the top three causes of death in the United States in 2000?
 - Tobacco use (435,000 deaths)
 - Poor diet and physical inactivity (400,000 deaths)
 - Alcohol consumption (85,000 deaths)
- Deaths from poor diet and physical inactivity are based on deaths from overweight and obesity.
- How can overweight and obesity lead to death? *Discuss.*
 - Overweight and obesity increase a person’s risk for heart disease, certain cancers and other conditions which can cause death.
- Clearly, the food we put into our bodies has a powerful effect on our health and well-being.



Overview

- In this lesson, you will:
 - Explore the relationship between diet and health;
 - Play a game about how American diets have changed over recent decades;
 - Discuss reasons why people eat what they eat;
 - Learn about interventions designed to improve diets, and design your own.



Essential questions

- These questions reflect the “big ideas” covered in this lesson.
- *Allow students time to read and reflect upon the essential questions.*
- *Briefly solicit students’ initial responses to the questions.*
- *If you intend to use essential questions on exams or essay questions, notify students now.*

15 min Effects of diet on health

Lecture-discussion

Covers nutrient density, energy intake, healthy diets and risk factors for diet-related disease.



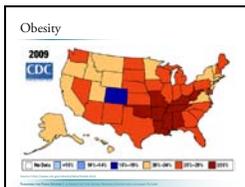
Overview: Diet and health

- Why does it matter what we eat?
- Food provides nutrients which promote growth, maintenance, and repair of our body's cells.
- While food is essential for survival, the Standard American Diet, or SAD, is largely responsible for a number of major health problems.



Diet-related diseases (2 slides)

- Diet-related diseases are diseases that can be caused, in part, by what we eat (and don't eat). What are some common diet-related diseases?
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Certain cancers
 - Stroke
 - Hypertension



Obesity (5 slides)

- Overweight and obesity are not generally considered diseases, but they can lead to disease and death. Overweight is the second leading cause of death in the United States.²
- This sequence of slides depicts the rise in obesity in the United States.
- Overweight and obesity have become more common in the United States. In 2003-04, two-thirds of adults were either **overweight** or obese, compared to about half of adults in 1976-80.³
- Among children and adolescents, obesity rates have more than tripled over the past twenty years.⁴
- One in every three American children is now overweight or obese, and is predicted to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime.⁵ Partially due to this, the current generation of American children is predicted to have a shorter lifespan than their parents.⁵



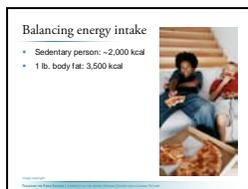
Risk factors (2 slides)

- What types of foods and ingredients, if consumed in excess, can lead to diet-related diseases? *Discuss.*
 - Added fats and added sugars can lead to overweight, obesity and a host of diet-related diseases. *Brainstorm examples of specific foods.*
 - Excess salt may lead to hypertension, stroke, kidney disease and coronary artery disease. *Brainstorm examples of specific foods.*
 - Some processed meats, such as hot dogs and pepperoni can increase the risk of developing certain cancers.



Added sugars, added fats

- What is the difference between the added sugar in a can of soda and the sugar in a pear? *Discuss.*
 - A pear contains about 16 grams of naturally-occurring sugar. Pears also contain beneficial nutrients, such as fiber and vitamins. The fiber in a pear is filling, so it is unlikely that someone would eat too much sugar from eating pears.
 - A can of soda typically contains about 40 grams of sugar. Soda is an extremely **nutrient-poor** food; drinking it does little more than add extra calories to your diet with no nutritional benefit. This can set the stage for health problems.
- What is the difference between the added fat in a snack cake and the fat in an avocado? *Discuss.*



Balancing energy intake (2 slides)

- Another behavior that contributes to obesity and diet-related disease is consuming too many calories (kcal).
- In order to maintain an even weight, people must balance the number of calories they eat with the number of calories they expend during daily activities (such as exercise).
- What is the recommended amount of calories for a sedentary teenager or adult?
 - Roughly 2,000 calories per day.
 - Every 3,500 calories consumed that is not burned off by activity becomes a pound of body fat.
- How many calories would a person have to burn in their daily activities if they wanted to keep their weight the same?



Balancing energy intake (continued)

- An inactive person would need to burn 2,000 calories.
- An active person would need more than 2,000 calories.



Eating for health (2 slides)

- What types of foods can reduce the risk for diet-related diseases? *Brainstorm specific examples for each type:*
 - Vegetables
 - Fruits
 - Whole grains
- Americans are advised to eat more of these foods. Why are these foods generally considered healthy? *Discuss.*
- These foods are generally considered nutrient-dense. Relative to the amount of calories in these foods, they provide high levels of vitamins, fiber and other nutrients that promote health and well-being.

30 min Trends in American diets

Activity

Students will move to different stations around the classroom. Each station represents a different response to questions about how American diets have changed over recent decades.

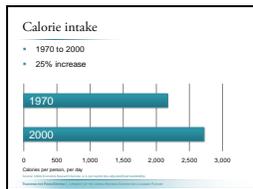
- Tape four signs around the classroom. Illustrate and label them as follows:

<p>Decreased</p> 	<p>Increased by up to 50%</p> 
<p>Increased by 50 to 100%</p> 	<p>More than doubled</p> 



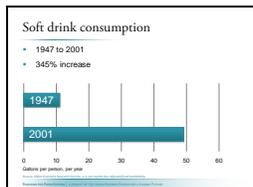
Overview: Trends in American diets

- Over time, a society's dietary habits may change. In this activity, you will make educated guesses as to how American diets have changed over recent decades. We'll also talk about some of the reasons behind those changes.
- *Students will stand up for the duration of this activity.*
- *For each question that follows, students will respond by choosing how they think the behavior described has changed over the given time period, then move to the corresponding sign.*
- *Wait for students to move to a sign before revealing the answer on the following slide.*
- *After students move, ask several volunteers to justify their responses.*



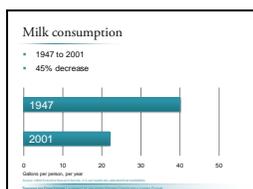
Calorie intake (2 slides)

- From 1970 to 2000, how much did the number of calories Americans ate each day increase or decrease?
- It is difficult to measure how much people eat. Some researchers use the amount of calories in the food supply as an approximate measure of what people eat. Other researchers use data from surveys.
- The average amount of calories available in the U.S. food supply to each citizen, each day, increased by 25%, or almost 550 calories.⁶ That's about as many calories as are in a McDonald's Big Mac.⁷
 - 1970: 2,169 calories available per person, per day
 - 2000: 2,717 calories per person, per day
- Dietary surveys of U.S. adults over the same time period suggest the increase in what Americans ate was closer to 250 calories.⁸
- Regardless of how calorie intake is estimated, the fact that the prevalence of obesity doubled between 1970 and 2000 indicates that Americans are eating far more calories than they expend.⁸⁻¹⁰
- What might explain why Americans are eating more calories? *Discuss.*
 - *Answers may include: larger portion sizes; more calories available in the food supply, effects of marketing, etc.*



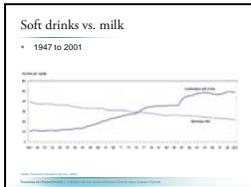
Soft drink consumption (2 slides)

- From 1947 to 2001, how much did the amount of soft drinks Americans drank per person increase or decrease?
- It increased by 345%.⁶
 - 1947: 11 gallons per person per year
 - 2001: 49 gallons per person per year, more than four times the amount consumed in 1947
- Why are Americans drinking more soft drinks? *Discuss.*
 - *Answers may include: more soft drinks on retail shelves, the effect of marketing, etc.*
- Can you remember the last television commercial, magazine ad, or billboard advertising a particular soft drink that you saw?



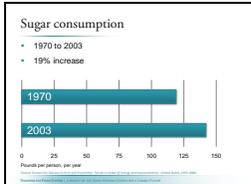
Milk consumption (2 slides)

- From 1947 to 2001, how much did the amount of milk Americans drank per person increase or decrease?
- It decreased by 45%.⁶
 - 1947: 40 gallons per person per year
 - 2001: 22 gallons per person per year
- Why are we drinking less milk?
 - *Answers may include: competition from other beverages, public concern about cholesterol, saturated fat, and calories, etc.*



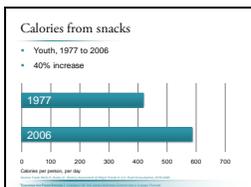
Soft drink vs. milk consumption

- Between 1947 and 2001, per capita consumption of carbonated soft drinks more than quadrupled while milk consumption declined by almost one-half.⁶
- How do the nutritional qualities of milk compare to those of soft drinks?
 - Milk is a much more nutrient-dense food.



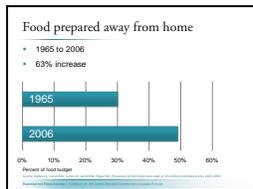
Sugar consumption (2 slides)

- Between 1970 and 2003, how much did the amount of sugar and sweeteners Americans consume each year increase or decrease?
- Answer: It increased by 19%.⁸
 - 1970: 119 pounds per person per year
 - 2003: 142 pounds per person per year
- Sweetened foods and beverages have become a prominent part of what has been called the standard American diet, or SAD.¹¹ Nearly half of the added sugars consumed by Americans is from drinking soda and fruit juice.¹²
- What foods do you eat that contain sugar?
 - *Students may not be aware that many of the processed foods they eat contain added sugars; encourage them to check the nutrition labels on some of their favorite items.*
- If you're looking on the nutrition label, will sugar and sweeteners always be labeled as "sugar"?
 - Common sweeteners include corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, fruit juice concentrate, maltose, dextrose, sucrose, honey, and maple syrup.



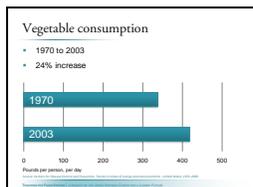
Calories from snacks (2 slides)

- From 1977 to 2006, how much did the number of calories that American youth (aged 2-18) ate from snacks increase or decrease?
- It increased by 40%.³
 - 1977: 418 calories from snacks per day
 - 2006: 586 calories from snacks per day
- How often do you snack each day?
- What foods do you eat for snacks?



Food prepared away from home (2 slides)

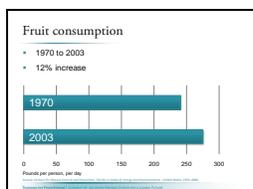
- From 1965 to 2006, how much did the percent of Americans' food budgets spent eating food prepared away from home increase or decrease?
- It increased by 63%.⁴
 - 1965: 30% spent on food prepared away from home
 - 2006: 49% spent on food prepared away from home
- How often do you or your family eat out in a month?
- Why would eating out at restaurants and other retailers be of concern to public health professionals?
 - Nutritional information on foods may not be available. Some restaurants—particularly chain restaurants—may be required in some cities to have nutrition facts on their websites or in a separate document (refer to *Food Marketing and Labeling*).⁵
 - Portion sizes of meals prepared away from home may be larger than those prepared at home.
- About one in three U.S. children now eat at a fast food restaurant daily.¹³
- Snacking more and eating more meals away from home may partly explain why the Standard American Diet is much higher in refined grains, added fats and added sugar.¹¹



Vegetable consumption (2 slides)

- Between 1970 and 2003, did the amount of vegetables Americans eat each year increase or decrease?
- It increased by 24%.⁸
 - 1970: 337 pounds of vegetables per person per year
 - 2003: 418 pounds of vegetables per person per year
- Do you usually have a vegetable at every meal? What vegetables do you like to eat?

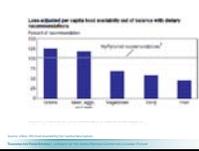
The USDA recommends 2.5 cups of vegetables per day for most teens and adults.⁹



Fruit consumption (2 slides)

- Between 1970 and 2003, did the amount of fruit Americans eat each year increase or decrease?
- It increased by 12%.⁸
 - 1970: 241 pounds of fruit per person per year
 - 2003: 275 pounds of fruit per person per year
- How much fruit do you eat in a day? What fruits do you like to eat?
- The USDA recommends 2 cups of fruit per day for most teens and adults.⁹

Fruit and vegetable consumption



Fruit and vegetable consumption

- Despite the increases in fruit and vegetable consumption, Americans still eat less than the recommended amounts.
- Have you heard of the “5 A Day” campaign? This campaign encourages Americans to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, or 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables.¹⁰
- In 2005, Americans ate only 0.9 cups of fruit per day and 1.7 cups of vegetables per day.¹¹

Summary

- Too much:
 - Refined grains
 - Added fats
 - Added sugars
 - Sodium
- Not enough:
 - Vegetables
 - Fruits
 - Fiber



Summary

- Since 1950, the greatest contributors to increased caloric intake have been refined grains, added fats and added sugars.¹¹
- USDA data suggest that these foods and ingredients are eaten in quantities that exceed recommended limits.³
- Americans also consume more sodium than is recommended, and not enough fiber.¹¹
- Refined grains, commonly found in breads, pastries, cookies and pasta, lack much of the **fiber** and **nutrients** present in **whole grains**, which are less **processed** (refer to *Food Processing*).
- Refined grains, added fats and added sugars are often found in **nutrient-poor** foods—products like sweetened beverages, cookies, candy and chips that are high in calories but provide few of the vitamins and minerals necessary for optimal health.¹⁴
- This is in contrast to nutrient-dense foods, like fruits and vegetables, of which Americans are advised to eat considerably more.^{3,11}

30 min Influences on food choice

Brainstorm

Students will brainstorm a list of influences on food choice and group them by common themes.

Lecture-discussion

Covers individual, social and environmental influences on food choice, including food and farm policy.

Activity

Students will take a stand on which factors they believe have the greatest effect on food choice.

- Based on what we've learned so far, would you agree that the Standard American Diet (SAD) could be improved?
- If we're going to try and change diets, we first have to understand why people eat what they eat.

Brainstorm

- In this activity, we will brainstorm a list of influences on food choice. Start by thinking about what you ate yesterday. Why did you choose those foods?
- Write student responses on the board, grouping them by the categories depicted in the example below. If you plan to follow this module with other lessons from [Unit III](#), you may wish to leave the results of this brainstorm on the board.
- Before revealing the names of each category, ask students for suggestions based on what the examples in each group have in common.
- The following example is suggestive of what the board might look like after the activity. It is not a comprehensive list.

INDIVIDUAL	SOCIAL	FOOD ENVIRONMENTS	FOOD MARKETING AND LABELING	FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY
HUNGER TASTE INCOME KNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS HEALTH CONDITIONS VALUES: - NUTRITION - CONVENIENCE - ENVIRONMENT - PUBLIC HEALTH - SOCIAL JUSTICE - ANIMAL WELFARE	EATING BEHAVIORS OF: - FRIENDS - FAMILY - COWORKERS - PEERS	COST AND AVAILABILITY OF FOODS IN: - HOMES - SCHOOLS - RESTAURANTS - STORES - COMMUNITIES ACCESS: - PUBLIC TRANSIT - SIDEWALKS	ADVERTISEMENTS: - BILLBOARDS - TELEVISION - INTERNET - MAGAZINES - NEWSPAPERS LABELS: - NUTRITION - ORGANIC - FAIR TRADE	FOOD AND NUTRITION ASSISTANCE FARM SUBSIDIES SUPPORT FOR ORGANIC REGULATIONS ON MARKETING

Lecture-discussion



Overview: Influences on food choice

- Surveys suggest that American consumers prioritize taste, cost, nutrition and convenience (in that order) when making food choices.¹⁵
- Some influences on food choice, such as taste preferences, are personal.
- Other influences stem from our surroundings, such as food advertisements, the cost and availability of food in a community, and the eating habits of friends and family.¹⁶



Individual influences (2 slides)

- Individual influences have to do with the personal reasons why people eat what they eat. On surveys, people generally claim taste as the most important factor in choosing what to eat.¹⁵
- What people typically think of as “taste” is actually a combination of taste, smell and texture.¹⁷ Laboratory studies have found that combinations of sugar and fat are generally the most appealing to taste preferences¹⁷—something to consider when attempting to promote healthy eating behaviors.
- Emotional and physiological states, such as stress and hunger, can prompt people to eat more calories and make less healthy choices.¹⁸
- Health conditions, such as allergies¹⁹ and diabetes,²⁰ may restrict food choices (*see photo*).



Individual influences (continued)

- Other important individual influences on food choice include income level, gender, age, genetics and the presence of eating disorders.¹⁷
- Food choices are also influenced by personal attitudes and values. Consumers who prioritize nutrition, family or culture, for example, might choose different foods than consumers who prioritize convenience (*see photo*).
- Consumers concerned about **public health**, environmental, social justice, economic or animal welfare issues in the **food system** may choose to “vote with their forks” by making food choices that align with their values.
- Greater knowledge of these issues (perhaps gained by taking a course about food systems) can further empower consumers to make more informed choices.
- *Ask students to share specific examples of individual influences on their food choices. For example, students may like the taste and texture of certain foods, eat certain dishes for cultural reasons, or avoid certain foods that do not align with their values.*



Social influences

- The people we associate with can have a powerful effect on what we eat.
- Studies have found that people tend to mimic the eating behaviors of their friends, families and coworkers.²¹
- In households where parents regularly ate fruits and vegetables, for example, children were more likely to do the same.²²⁻²⁴
- In homes where parents frequently drank soft drinks, soft drink consumption among children was higher.²⁵
- These associations demonstrate the value of leading by example, in contrast to telling others what to eat. While positive encouragement has been shown to foster healthy eating behaviors among friends and family, attempts to control what children eat generally result in unhealthy eating behaviors.²¹
- *Ask students to share specific examples of social influences on their food choices. For example, students may eat certain foods as part of an after school activity with their friends.*



Food environments

- In this curriculum, we use the term **food environments** to refer to homes, schools, stores, restaurants, community gardens, soup kitchens, food banks and other physical settings where the cost and availability of food influence what people eat.
- At the neighborhood level, food environments can also refer to the availability of food within a community and how easily residents can access those foods.^{16,21} The cost and availability of different foods in a community, for example, are often associated with what its residents eat, and their health.²⁶
- *These and other physical influences are discussed in the [Food Environments](#) module.*
- *Ask students to share specific examples of how their food environment affects their food choices. For example, students may be limited in their food choices based on what is offered in their cafeteria.*



Cost

- Cost can be a particularly important factor in what people choose to eat.
- In some cases, the least healthy choices are also the most affordable—high-fat and high-sugar foods, for example, tend to cost less per calorie than healthier alternatives like fruits and vegetables.^{16,27}
- This could make it difficult for some lower-income consumers to afford healthier options^{16,27,28} (though it is worth noting that nearly all Americans—not just those of low-income—fail to meet USDA dietary recommendations).²⁹
- The USDA argues that a healthy diet is affordable for most U.S. families, acknowledging that such claims are complicated by the fact that there is enormous variation in the foods—and the prices of those foods—that make up a healthy diet.²⁸
- Do you think healthy diets are affordable for most people? If not, what can be done to make them affordable? *Discuss.*
- *Issues of income, cost and access to food are further discussed in [Hunger and Food Security](#).*
- *The cost of food may be a sensitive subject for students from families that struggle to acquire adequate, healthy food. Approach this subject with caution and respect for privacy.*



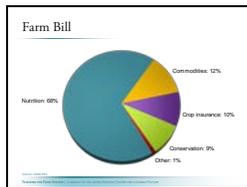
Food marketing and labeling

- Our surroundings also include the messages we are exposed to through advertisements on billboards, internet, television, product packaging and other media.
- Food marketing can have a powerful effect on food choices by planting conscious and subconscious cues to purchase certain products.
- Food marketing in the United States is primarily geared toward promoting sales of **convenience foods**, snack foods and foods that are high in sugar, fat, and salt.³⁰
- Food labels, such as those that convey information about nutritional content and production practices, can help consumers make more informed food choices; however, labels can also be used as a marketing tool.³¹
- *These topics are further discussed in the [Food Marketing and Labeling](#) module.*
- *Ask students to share specific examples of how food marketing and labeling affects their food choices. Note that they are likely unaware of how food advertising affects their food choices on a subconscious level.*



Food and agricultural policy

- Policies made by state and federal government can have a powerful influence on what people eat, sometimes through indirect means.
- One of the most influential U.S. food and agricultural policies is a complex piece of legislation called the **Farm Bill**.
- What have you heard about the Farm Bill? *Solicit responses.*



Farm Bill

- The vast majority of federal funding allocated by the Farm Bill is for the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program), a program that supports millions of low-income Americans (refer to *Hunger and Food Security*).³²
- The Farm Bill also affects what foods are produced in the United States, how they are produced, and in what quantities.
- For example, the Farm Bill allocates funding for environmental conservation, agricultural research, and assistance to farmers transitioning to organic agriculture.³³ *The pie chart reflects the relative amounts of spending for each Farm Bill program. Farm subsidies fall under the 'commodities' program.*



Farm subsidies

- **Farm subsidies** are payments allocated by the Farm Bill made to farmers and agricultural industries. Most farm subsidies are for crops such as corn, wheat, cotton and soy.³⁴ *The height of each image reflects the relative subsidy amount for these crops.*
- Subsidies also support meat, dairy and egg producers, who save billions of dollars annually due to the lower cost of corn and soybeans purchased for animal feed.³⁵



Farm subsidies (continued)

- Contrary to common criticisms of the Farm Bill, evidence does not support the idea that farm subsidies contribute to the obesity epidemic.^{32,36}
 - It has been suggested that farm subsidies lower the price of “junk foods” by supporting the production of corn and soybeans, which are commonly manufactured into sweeteners, oils and other additives.
 - But when consumers buy soft drinks, corn chips and other highly processed foods, most of their money covers the cost of processing, packaging, shipping, marketing and selling the final product (refer to *Food Marketing and Labeling*).
 - Because corn and soy generally represent only a small fraction of the cost of these foods, subsidies have little or no effect on making them cheaper to consumers.³²
- Are there any food and farm policies that you would change? If so, why?

Activity

- Mark four stations around the classroom. Label the stations “individual,” “social,” “food environments,” “food marketing and labeling” and “policy.”
- Which of these influences do you think has the greatest effect on what we eat?
- Students will respond by standing by the stations that most reflect their opinions. Ask volunteers to justify their responses.
- If you wanted to change peoples’ eating behavior, on which influences would you target your intervention?
- Students will respond by standing by the stations that most reflect their opinions. Ask volunteers to justify their responses.

30 min Improving American diets

Lecture

Covers interventions aimed at improving American diets.

Project

Students will design their own intervention to improve eating behaviors.



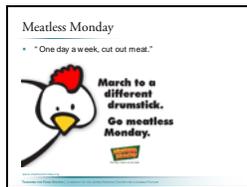
Overview: Improving American diets

- As a general rule, most nutritionists recommend limiting intake of added fats and added sugars, balancing calorie intake with physical activity levels, eating more fruits and vegetables and choosing whole grains over refined grains.^{3,11,37}
- Author Michael Pollan sums this up in his book *Food Rules*, where he writes “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”³⁸
- This advice seems simple enough, but changing American diets is no simple undertaking. Because there are so many influences on food choice, educating consumers about healthy choices may not be enough.
- Research suggests that in order to successfully change eating behaviors, peoples’ surroundings must support making those choices.²¹
- For this reason, a combined approach is needed: Some initiatives target individual influences on food choices, while others target a combination of social, environmental, marketing or policy influences.



Reducing childhood obesity

- Efforts to tackle childhood obesity are an example of this approach.
- Some of the solutions proposed by public health advocates include:
 - Offering discounts on nutrient-rich foods;
 - Changing social norms around healthy eating habits;
 - Reducing marketing of food to children;
 - Making nutrition advice simpler for parents and caregivers to understand and follow;
 - Changing the food environment, including by opening grocery stores closer to children’s homes.⁵
- Many schools are also helping to foster healthier eating habits among youth (refer to the *Food Environments* module).



Meatless Monday

- The *Meatless Monday* movement, to give another example, is a dietary intervention that encourages people to replace animal products with healthy vegan or vegetarian alternatives at least one day per week.
- In addition to the health benefits of eating more plant-based foods (see *Effects of diet on health*, above), moderating meat consumption could also reduce the demand for animal products in the United States, most of which are produced under a system that contributes to numerous public health, environmental, social and animal welfare harms (refer to *Food Animal Production*).
- The *Meatless Monday* movement targets individual behavior through print, television and internet media.
- It also works to change the food environment by partnering with schools, hospitals and other institutions to offer more plant-based options on Mondays.³⁹

Project

- *Provide each student with a copy of the Dietary Health Intervention handout.*
- *Students will design an intervention aimed at improving diets. Detailed instructions are given on the handout.*
- *If time allows, have students present their interventions to the class. Allow opportunities for comments, questions and constructive critique from peers.*
- *Students may work in small groups.*

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