

EATING AWAY FROM HOME

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

Unhealthy foods threaten the health of children

Texas children consume fast food and fried snacks at worrying levels. These unhealthy foods are generally consumed away from home, are highly-processed, and tend to be relatively low in nutrients and high in calories.³

Eating Away From Home is a Health Risk

On a given school day:



62.7% of 2nd graders and 42.5% of 11th graders eat at a restaurant.¹



Eating away from home in 4th graders varies by race/ethnicity:¹

- 36.0% of White/ Other
- 54.2% of African Americans
- 42.1% of Hispanics.



Most students who eat at restaurants also eat fried foods over the entire day:¹

- 78.5% of 2nd graders
- 79.8% of 4th graders
- 82.1% of 8th graders
- 81.8% of 11th graders.



Most students who eat at restaurants also drink a sugar-sweetened drink* over the entire day:¹

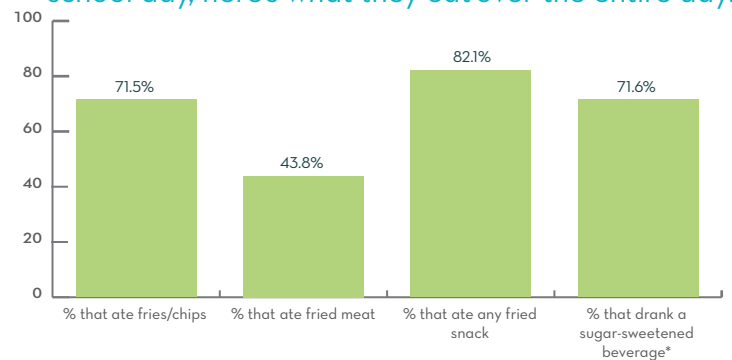
- 56.9% of 2nd graders
- 72.7% of 4th graders
- 71.6% of 8th graders
- 65.8% of 11th graders.

Why This Behavior is Risky

Eating too much fast food can affect children's overall nutritional status due to excessive calories and fat, and an overall low nutritional value.² Eating fast food is associated with other poor dietary choices including:²

- More soft drinks and chips available at home
- Lower intake of fruits and vegetables

35.3% of 8th graders eat at a restaurant on a given school day, here's what they eat over the entire day:¹



View 2nd, 4th, & 11th grade data at go.uth.edu/fastfood

We can increase healthy food choices when eating away from home by:

- Going to restaurants that post calorie information at the point of purchase²
- Choosing food at restaurants that are grilled or baked and always ordering fruits and vegetables⁴
- Supporting limitations on advertising fast food to children⁸
- Supporting policies to limit sugar-sweetened drinks* as the default for kids meals⁵
- Supporting policies that limit the distance of fast food restaurants from schools⁷

Current Low Nutritional Value Food Guidelines

Reduce sodium intake and limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats.⁹

- **Sodium:**
 - Ages 1-3: No more than 1,500 mg
 - Ages 4-8: No more than 1,900 mg
 - Ages 9-13: No more than 2,200 mg
 - Ages 14-18: No more than 2,300 mg
- **Added sugars:** Less than 10% of daily calories
- **Saturated Fats:** Less than 10% of daily calories

Choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods and beverages.⁹



References

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The School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project is a surveillance system monitoring the prevalence of overweight/obesity in school-aged children in Texas conducted by researchers at the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. SPAN has been funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services since 2000 to conduct height and weight measurements across different grade levels.
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*Sugar-sweetened beverage is defined as a regular (not diet) soda, punch, or sports drink on the Texas SPAN Survey¹

About the Texas Child Health Status Report

These reports utilize state-level data from the School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health. This project is funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

Learn more at go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth

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