

Helpful Resources

Houston Health Department  
www.houstontx.gov/health/  
Community Gardens  
Www.houstontx.gov/health/  
community-garden-program

Texas Department of Agriculture  
www.squaremeals.org

Better Living for Texans Program  
blt.tamu.edu

CAN DO HOUSTON  
www.candohouston.org

Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention  
www.cdc.gov/obesity/index.html

Children At Risk  
www.childrenatrisk.org

Doctors For Change  
www.doctorsforchange.org/hope

Go Healthy Houston  
www.gohealthyhouston.org

Healthy Living Matters  
www.healthylivingmatters.net

Houston Food Bank  
www.houstonfoodbank.org

Let’s Move!  
www.letsmove.gov

Recipe For Success  
www.recipe4sucess.org

Shape Up Houston  
www.shapeuphouston.org

Texas Department of State Health  
Services  
www.dshs.state.tx.us/obesity

Urban Harvest  
www.urbanharvest.org

U.S Department of Health and Human  
Services Office of Adolescent Health  
http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/  
adolescent-health-topics/index.html

GET INVOLVED!<sup>14, 16</sup>

Youth

- Increase physical activity to 60 minutes or longer each day.

Parents

- Encourage your children to watch less television and increase their physical activity.
- Model physical activity and healthy eating for your children.
- Provide more nutritious meals and snacks.

School Personnel

- Increase access to free water throughout the school day.
- Position healthy foods and beverages in highly-visible areas in school cafeterias and check-out aisles.

Community

- Create agreements with local school districts and community-based organizations.
- Develop and implement a Safe Routes to School (SRTS)/Walking School Bus plan.
- Use a coordinated approach to develop, implement, and evaluate healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices.
- Partner with families and community members in the development and implementation of healthy eating and physical activity policies, practices and programs.
- Improve access to outdoor recreational facilities.
- Advocate for more healthy food establishments.

References and More!

Please visit <http://www.houstontx.gov/health/hdhhs-profiles> for a full list of references.

Other Titles in this Series:

- Youth Sexual Health/STIs/HIV
  - Youth Suicide Prevention
  - Youth Mental Health
  - Youth Violence Prevention
  - Teen Dating Violence Prevention
  - Youth Immunizations
  - Teen Pregnancy & Prevention
- Youth Homelessness
  - Youth Substance Abuse & Prevention
  - Youth Bullying & Prevention
  - Overall Summary of Youth Health Profiles

For more information, please contact Adolescent Health and Injury Prevention (AHIP) via the Houston Youth Voice, Health, Safety Coalition at: 4youthvoice@houstontx.gov  
Facebook: 4youthvoicehouston Twitter: @4youthvoice

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Youth in Houston & Harris County<sup>1-3</sup>

Population\*  
Houston: 601,918 (29%)  
Harris County: 1,263,889 (31%)

Poverty  
Children under 18 living below poverty level:  
Houston: 35.3%  
Harris County: 27.4%

Education  
High School Graduates (ages 18-24):  
Houston: 29.3%  
Harris County: 30.5%

Demographic Snapshot of Youth<sup>4,14</sup>

Below is a snapshot of the demographics for youth living in Houston and Harris County.

Gender  
Houston: Harris County:  
Male: 51% Male: 51%  
Female: 49% Female: 49%

Age  
Houston: Harris County:  
Under 5 years: 28% 27%  
5 to 9 years: 25% 25%  
10 to 14 years: 23% 24%  
15 to 19 years: 24% 24%

Race/Ethnicity  
Harris County:  
Hispanic: 51%  
White: 23%  
Black: 19%  
Other: 7%

\* Percentages (youth under the age of 19) are representative of the total Houston/Harris County population.  
‡ As of 2010, percentages are based on total population of Houston and/or Harris County under the age of 19.

Working together to **underscore** the  
importance of **PREVENTION!**



Youth Obesity & Prevention

Profile of the City of Houston & Harris County, Texas

Obesity now affects 17% of all children and adolescents in the United States - triple the rate from one generation ago. There are immediate and long-term health effects from childhood obesity. Childhood obesity is on the rise, especially among Texas youth. In 2011, Texas had the 10th highest childhood obesity rate with 19.1% of 10 to 17 year olds considered obese.<sup>5</sup> In 2013, Texas had the 5th highest obesity rate among high school students with 15.7% of high school student considered obese.

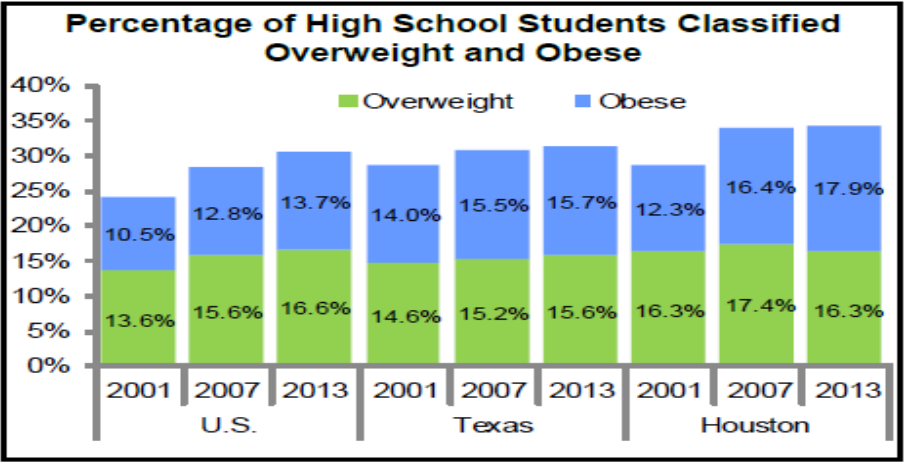
Overweight & Obesity: An Overview

A child's weight status is determined using an age and sex specific percentile for Body Mass Index (BMI). **Overweight** is defined as a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex. **Obesity** is defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for children of the same age and sex.<sup>6</sup>

Obesity leads to a number of adverse outcomes and puts children and adults at risk for diabetes, heart disease, asthma and cardiovascular disease.<sup>6</sup>

The 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) conducted by the CDC reported **17.9%** of Houston high school students were obese, compared to **15.7%** of high school students in Texas.<sup>7</sup>

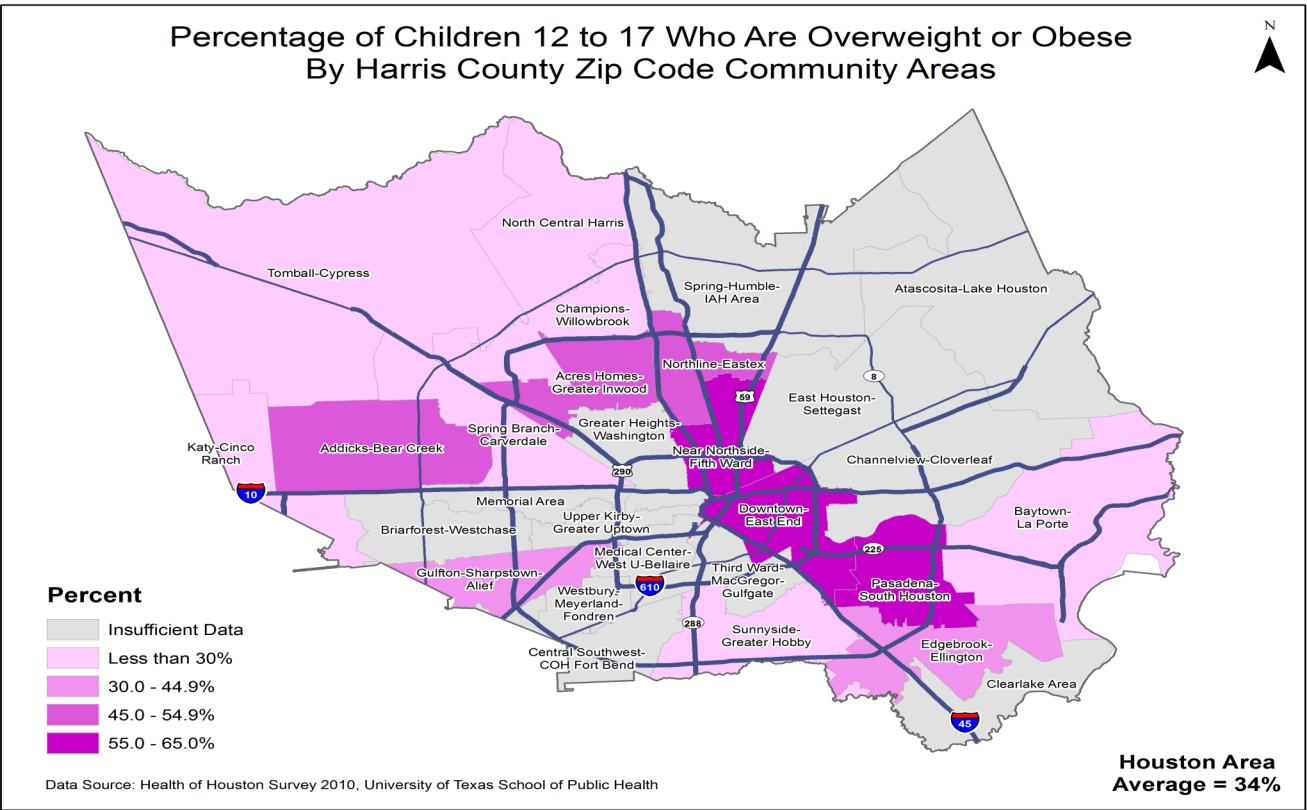
Trends: Houston/Texas 2001-2013



Source: CDC, YRBS

*79% of high school students in Texas eat fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.<sup>5</sup>*

*“Regular physical activity helps improve overall health and fitness, and reduces the risk for many chronic diseases.”<sup>8</sup>*



WHAT WORKS?

The programs listed below are a compilation of initiatives, campaigns, and programs that are research informed, apply best practices and have the potential to be implemented in various settings. Below are some examples of these types of programs for obesity intervention and prevention.

Program	What Is It?	Website
New Moves*	New Moves is a school-based physical education (PE) intervention aimed at preventing weight-related problems in adolescent girls by increasing their physical activity, improving their body image and self-worth, and improving their diet.	<a href="http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=354">http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=354</a>
Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)	The CATCH program for schools is based on the CDC coordinated school health model (as it relates to physical activity and diet) in which eight components work interactively to education youth people about and provide support for healthful lifestyle.	<a href="http://catchinfo.org/about">http://catchinfo.org/about</a>
JOIN for ME	JOIN is a community-based initiative focused on families with children dealing with excess weight. Parents and children meet in a supportive environment with an experienced health living coach and learn real-life skills for attaining and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.	<a href="http://www.ymcagreaterprovidence.org/Programs/JOIN4MEHealthyWeightforKidsTeens/tabid/337/Default.aspx">http://www.ymcagreaterprovidence.org/Programs/JOIN4MEHealthyWeightforKidsTeens/tabid/337/Default.aspx</a>

\*Denotes evidence based program as listed by SAMHSA—National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

Recommendations:

- Youth ages 6-17 should participate in at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity consisting of aerobic activity.<sup>8</sup>
- Follow proper dietary proportions as recommended by Choose My Plate.
- Screen time\* should be limited to no more than 2 hours per day.<sup>10</sup>
  - \*Screen time is defined as time spent watching TV, videotapes or DVDs; playing video games or computer games; and surfing
- Increase the number of healthy food grocery stores and restaurants in undeserved communities.

“Seventy-seven percent of children ages 6 to 17 in Harris County are not getting the recommended physical activity to maintain a healthy weight.”<sup>11</sup>

Related Policies and Policy Implications:<sup>12, 13, 14</sup>

Texas Physical Education (PE) Requirements:<sup>15</sup>

- Middle school students must take four semesters of PE. High school students must complete one credit of PE to graduate.
- School districts must establish wellness policies that help ensure students get the required amount of physical activity, proper nutrition and overall health.
- Promote food policy capacity as a way to improve the food environment at state and local levels.
- The US Preventive Service Task Force recommends that clinicians screen children aged 6 years and older for obesity, as well as offer or refer them to comprehensive, intensive behavioral interventions to promote improved weight and functioning.

Eating Habits and Physical Activity<sup>7</sup>

Eating Habits of Houston teens:

- 78% are not meeting the daily recommended fruit intake.
- 86% are not meeting the daily recommended vegetable intake.
  - 1 in 4 consume at least one sugary drink per day.

Physical Activity:

- 66% of children are considered “inactive.”
- 78% of Houston high school students did not attend daily Physical Education (PE) classes.
- 32.7% of Houston high school students reported watching television for at least three hours per day.



Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism, and improved mood.<sup>9</sup>

