

## Chapter 7

### Weight Control: Challenges and Solutions

**Student assignments and activities designed to enhance learning and stimulate critical thinking.**

1. Research waist circumference, a measurement used to determine abdominal fat. What is the rationale for using body mass index (BMI) rather than waist circumference to identify adults who are overweight and obese?
2. Suggest reasons why the Centers for Disease Control and the American Obesity Association use different vocabulary to describe the same phenomena, that of a BMI-for-age at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile.
3. Your friend's 13-year-old daughter, Alicia, has recently been seen by her primary care physician, who recommended that Alicia see a dietitian. Alicia's BMI history is listed below. Using the female growth chart on page 167, plot Alicia's BMI history. Based on the growth chart, describe Alicia's BMI changes over time. What is Alicia's current weight status? What recommendations would you give your friend?

Age	BMI
2	15
3	15.2
4	16.7
7	19.9
11	24.1
13	27.7

4. Assess the built environment in the community you live in. Describe five characteristics of the built environment that are "obesogenic," and five characteristics that promote a healthy weight. What are three possible and achievable environmental modifications that can be made in your community to prevent or treat obesity?
5. Describe three different community partnerships funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Active Living By Design Program (<http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=6>). What have been some recent accomplishments at each of these sites?

6. Review Box 7.4 and Table 7.6. Go to the supermarket and record each cereal brand that features a cartoon character or celebrity on the box. Buy one of these cereal boxes and bring it home. In a regular bowl, pour out the amount of cereal you would normally eat. Next, use a measuring cup to determine how many cups of cereal in your portion. Then, read the nutrition label on the box to determine the amount of sugar per serving. Based on the serving size listed, calculate the amount of sugar contained in your cereal portion. Finally, divide this amount by 4 to get the number of teaspoons of sugar in you portion of cereal. Be sure to show all your work.

In order to visualize the amount of sugar in your cereal portion, measure out the same number of teaspoons of sugar into a cup (if you do not have sugar, you can use another finely granulated substance, such as salt, garlic, sand, etc). Compare this to a 12-ounce cola, which contains 30 grams (7.5 teaspoons) of sugar. Describe what you learned from this exercise.

7. Watch a children's television program for one hour and count the number of commercials you view. Classify the food commercials based on the categories listed in Table 7.6 (page 176). How many of the commercials are food commercials? Of the food commercials, how many advertise processed foods? What category was most represented by the commercials you viewed? What category was least represented? What do you conclude from this exercise?

8. Food stamps are allotted to eligible households based on the Thrifty Food Plan, household size, and household net income. Discuss the positive and negative consequences of updating the current Thrifty Food Plan market basket to become more healthful. Additional information about the Thrifty Food Plan can be found at:

<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFoodPlansCostofFood.htm>.

9. Summarize and discuss at least three different policies regarding competitive foods that have been proposed or adopted as part of the Local School Wellness Policies. Additional information and sample policies can be found at the following websites:

- School Nutrition Association. Child Nutrition: Local School Wellness Policies.  
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Index.aspx?id=1076>
- Food Research and Action Center. Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Local School Wellness Policies Briefing.  
[http://www.frac.org/html/federal\\_food\\_programs/cnreauthor/wellness\\_briefing.htm](http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/cnreauthor/wellness_briefing.htm)
- USDA. Team Nutrition: Healthy Schools.  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy\\_steps.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy_steps.html)

10. How would you suggest preventing and reducing obesity in preschool-aged children?

11. Research one of the community prevention efforts funded by Steps to a Healthier US (<http://www.cdc.gov/steps/index.htm>). What were the results? Is this an effective program?

12. Read the following articles:

- Chmelynski C. States weigh idea of BMI reports as they tackle obesity epidemic. National School Boards Association. March 15, 2005. Available at:  
[http://www.nsba.org/site/doc\\_sbn.asp?TRACKID=&VID=58&CID=1141&DID=35520](http://www.nsba.org/site/doc_sbn.asp?TRACKID=&VID=58&CID=1141&DID=35520)
- Robinson V, Lear J, Eichner N. The role of school health professionals in preventing childhood overweight. The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools. April 2006.  
[www.healthinschools.org/Health+in+Schools/Health+Services/~/\\_media/Files/Obesityissuebrief.ashx](http://www.healthinschools.org/Health+in+Schools/Health+Services/~/_media/Files/Obesityissuebrief.ashx)
- Kantor J. As obesity fight hits cafeteria, many fear a note from school. *New York Times*. January 8, 2007. Available at:  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=9801E4DA1530F93BA35752C0A9619C8B63>

What are the arguments for and against mandatory BMI reporting of school-aged children to their parents. What is your position?