

Tue, February 10, 2004

- World
 - Iraq
 - War on Terror
 - Canada
 - Law & Order
 - Politics
 - Space
 - Science
 - Tech News
 - Media News
 - Weird News
 - In Depth
 - Canadiana
 - Weather
 - SHOP.Canoe
- Canoe Google

 Powered by **Google**
 Find it for less!

 Powered by **eBay** CA
 Learn how eBay works
- CANOE mortgages**
 CLICK HERE
- News Tickers
 - Atlantic
 - Ont/Que
 - The West
 - Business
 - Sun Papers
 - Columns
 - Your View
 - Today in History

Alarm bells raised about obesity

By HELEN BRANSWELL

TORONTO (CP) - The excess weight one out of every two Canadians carries around is becoming as serious a health threat as smoking was three decades ago, the Heart and Stroke Foundation warned Tuesday.

The group called for drastic action, including restricting junk-food and fast-food ads aimed at children, requiring fast food restaurants to post nutritional breakdowns for their offerings and to match prices to portions to reduce the appeal of super-sized products.

"The Heart and Stroke Foundation is not exaggerating when we say that fat is now the new tobacco," spokesperson Dr. Anthony Graham said as the foundation released its annual report card on the heart health of Canadians.

"We must turn this growing epidemic around for the sake of future generations. If not, all of the progress made in reducing death and disability from heart disease and stroke over the past three decades will be lost."

The recommendations Graham outlined - which included eliminating junk foods, pop and sugar-laden fruit drinks from school cafeterias - were aimed at the food industry.

But if moral suasion doesn't work, governments may have to act, said Graham, a cardiologist at St. Michael's Hospital

Friends from High School

[CLICK HERE](#) to find what your old friends are up to...

MacKenzie High (1103)	Monarch Park (545)
Victoria Prep (765)	Simon Fraser (676)
Xaviar Academy (1084)	YOUR High School (820)

5 DVDs for 49¢ each

+ special shipping & handling

PICK YOUR MOVIES NOW

Charities

Photo of the Day



in Toronto. He noted that 70 per cent of respondents to a survey done by the organization said they favoured the idea of restricting junk-food and fast-food advertising aimed at children.

"I think that the industry really needs to think about that very seriously. I think governments as they monitor how progress is being made in this area may wish to intervene."

Cathy Wing of the non-profit Media Awareness Network, which provides education about the impact of mass media, notes that many factors are to blame for poor food choices.

"Parents do have to be aware," she said in an interview from Ottawa. "We're all guilty of taking our kids to McDonald's looking for quick food because our lives are busy."

Information posted on her group's website - and provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1995 - says most food advertising on children's television promotes fast food, candy and presweetened cereals, while commercials for healthy food make up only four per cent of total advertisements.

"I don't see advertisements for healthy food unless it's a PSA (public service ad) from Health Canada," she said.

In the early 1970s, 47 per cent of Canadians smoked and 40 per cent were overweight. By 2001, smoking rates had plummeted to 22 per cent, but 47 per cent of Canadians were overweight.

The rise in the percentage of the population that is obese was even more dramatic, going from 10 per cent to 15 per cent over that period. One in seven Canadians is obese, noted Peter Katzmarzyk, an obesity and fitness researcher from Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

"When we look at these trend lines and the absolute number of Canadians who are affected, we're in the midst of an epidemic," he said.

Who is to blame? The foundation surveyed both average Canadians and a panel of experts to get a sense of where responsibility for change lies.

Most people thought weight problems were an individual responsibility, with only two per cent suggesting the food industry needed to take a lead role.

But the experts suggested the problem was environmental - rushed lives, heavy dependence on fast foods, obstacles to working daily exercise into one's routine.

"We as a society have made it very difficult for people to eat in a healthy way," Graham noted.

Obesity rates among children - which are rising faster than among the adult population - are particularly troubling, Katzmarzyk said.

"We need quality physical education back in the schools, daily, and I think that will help more than any other measure you can talk about," he said.

The group suggested excess weight is costing upwards of \$2 billion a year in this country in health-care costs related to increased rates of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and other conditions caused or aggravated by being overweight.



PRINTER-FRIENDLY VERSION



E-MAIL TO A FRIEND

cnews

Top News

CANADA | [RCMP, Via Rail, Canada Post involved in sponsorship fiasco: report](#)
WORLD | [Kerry wins Virginia and Tennessee, adding to big lead in nomination race](#)
TECH NEWS | [Microsoft issues security flaw warning](#)

CANADA | [Canada may have new Afghan role](#)
WORLD | [Deadly bomb blast in Iraq](#)
LAW & ORDER | [Election spending curbs under attack](#)

POLITICS | [Wife of Syrian immigrant withdraws bid for NDP candidacy](#)
WAR ON TERROR | [NATO commander says Afghan insurgency 'running out of energy'](#)
WEIRD NEWS | [Finnish millionaire gets speeding ticket costing a record \\$288,000 Cdn](#)

CNEWS Poll

What should happen to the Canadian Senate?

- Abolish it.
- Reform it.
- Leave it alone.
- Not sure.

SUBMIT

- [The results so far](#)
- [More on the story](#)

CANOE Your Internet Network ... **cnews**

Inside CANOE.CA

[CANOE home](#) | [We welcome your feedback.](#)

Copyright © 2004, CANOE, a division of [Netgrape Inc.](#) All rights reserved.