

# CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN BC

## A CALL TO RAPID PREVENTIVE ACTION

# 1 BIG PROBLEM

**27%** of children and youth in British Columbia are **overweight or obese**



And it's **getting worse** — obesity in Canadian teens **has tripled in 25 years**

**50%**

of **overweight** teens

**61%**

of **obese** teens

have a **major health risk** like

high blood pressure

high cholesterol

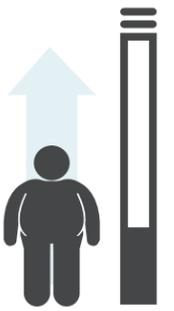
pre-diabetes or diabetes

and sometimes **more** than one risk

Without concerted action, by the time children born in 2000 are 40, up to

**80%**

**will be overweight or obese**



Excess weight could soon rival tobacco as the **world's leading cause of preventable premature death**



**\$1 BILLION:**

direct and indirect costs of obesity to BC's health care system



If current obesity trends continue, today's children could be the first generation **not to outlive their parents**

### A COMPLEX ISSUE UNDERPINNED BY DEEP-ROOTED AND MULTI-FACETED CAUSES

# 2 CONTRIBUTING CAUSES

**UNHEALTHY EATING & PHYSICAL INACTIVITY**



**93%** of children aged 4 to 8 years exceed the upper daily limit for sodium

**70%** eat less than five fruits and vegetables per day

**30%** drink 1 or more pop/day

**25%** of calories consumed by teens aged 14 to 18 come from high-fat, high-salt, high-sugar foods

**95%**

of Canadian children **do not meet** guidelines

of **60 mins** of **physical activity** a day



During peak viewing times on children's TV programs,

**95%**

of food ads were for **unhealthy foods**



Junk food marketers **spend billions** every year **targeting children and teens**

Teens spend, on average,

**almost 8hrs**

a day outside of school in front of screens, such as TVs and computers

**RISK OF OBESITY**



decreases **4.8%**

for each kilometre **walked** per day



increases **6%**

for each hour **spent in a car** per day

**41tsp** of sugar consumed/day by teen boys

### MUCH HAS BEEN DONE, BUT MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO REVERSE THE TREND

# 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Now is the time** for the Province to take greater action to address **unhealthy weights in children** and **prevent diet-related illness**



"As a leader in health, wellness and physical fitness, we believe BC should now take up the visionary torch with respect to childhood obesity...we hope to lead the Province on a path that reverses the alarming trend of poor eating and inactivity among our children and youth. We can show the way, and society, over time, can be changed—starting with our children"

- Select Standing Committee on Health First Report, November 2006

**85%+**

of parents agreed that schools should play a greater role in healthy eating and physical activity

**71%**

of parents agree that more active transportation options are needed

**77%**

of parents agree that marketing of food and beverages to children 12 years and under should be restricted

#### Healthy School Environment



Provide K-12 students 30-60 minutes of physical activity a day and lifelong physical literacy skills and habits



Adopt mandatory nutritional education and food skills training



Ensure Comprehensive School Health approach is adopted by all schools

#### Healthy Community Design



Apply Health Impact Assessment Lens to government decisions



Invest in programs that increase physical activity and foster healthy eating



Invest in active transportation and recreation infrastructure

#### Marketing to Children and Youth



Restrict the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children and teens



Expand school guidelines for food and beverage sales to include criteria for food industry sponsorships



Introduce incentives to market healthier foods to children

**Give children and youth the best start for a long, healthy life**