

Fewer US school districts promote junk food, soda (Update)

August 26 2013, by Mike Stobbe

There's been a big shift in how many U.S. school districts take money from soda companies and ban junk food from vending machines, health officials say.

A government survey found 44 percent of school districts banned junk food from vending machines last year, up from 30 percent in 2006.

It also found drops in how many districts took a cut of soft drink sales, received donations from soda companies, or allowed soda company advertising.

Those are considered positive steps in helping the U.S. reduce the number of children who are overweight and obese.

But it's not clear to how much impact the changes are having. The overall proportion of U.S. children who are overweight or obese has been holding steady at around 17 percent, according to government statistics.

Experts say that diet and exercise at home are at least as important as what kids are exposed to in school.

"There are lots and lots of factors that go into obesity rates," said Nancy Brener, lead author of the government report on the study. She is a health scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The findings come from a detailed government survey last year of more than 800 U.S. school districts. The CDC does the study every six years.

The CDC released the latest findings Monday.

More information: Report:

www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/shpps/index.htm

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