



# Wellness Challenges and Solutions

Schools across Iowa are faced with obstacles as nutrition and physical activity become more important for youth. We presented the following challenges during four Super-Power Summits, and 317 middle school students from 74 schools generated solutions.

## **Challenge:** Pop is no longer sold at school, but students still bring it in! **Solutions:**

- Don't allow pop in the school
- Offer a variety of drinks at lunch
- Make posters/advertise
- Demonstrate why not to drink pop with a science experiment
- Offer motivation for not drinking pop
- Be a role model
- Talk to students
- Show the side effects of it
- Have the gym or wellness teacher talk about how pop is bad for you

## **Challenge:** The staff lounge still has junk food in the vending machines. **Solutions:**

- If teachers are going to eat snacks they have to stay in the lounge to eat them
- Get rid of them
- Staff shouldn't be able to have the snack foods either
- Turn off vending machines during the day so no one can eat from them
- Put healthy foods in the vending machines

## **Challenge:** Students bring unhealthy sack lunches from home. **Solutions:**

- Teach them about healthy food
- Each kid only gets a certain amount of junk food each year
- Have a trade in center for healthy food
- If kids bring something unhealthy for lunch, they have to eat something healthy at school (for free)
- Have an incentive chart
- The school should have a survey of what students would like to see on the lunch menu
- Encourage kids to bring healthy food for lunch

## **Challenge:** Healthier fundraisers are needed. **Solutions:**

- Sell fruit baskets/fruit
- Hold a parade
- Hold a car wash
- Fun run or walk-a-thon
- Sell granola/fruit bars
- Have a health fair
- Do driveway paintings
- Sell food/health magazines
- Make healthy cookbooks
- Have a carnival
- Have bike races
- Organize a talent show
- Sell spirit wear
- Raffle donated prizes
- Have an exercise video competition





**Challenge:** Nothing healthy is offered in vending machines. **Solutions:**

- Move vending machines
- Replace candy with granola bars
- Replace pop with sports drinks and water
- Get rid of the machines
- Talk to kids about healthier choices
- Replace regular chips with baked chips
- Turn off until after school sports are over
- Survey what people like
- Have a talk about the machines
- Offer dairy products like string cheese
- Put healthy options in machines
- Raise prices
- Use an ID with a limit of twice per week
- Host a fun run or walk-a-thon
- Fill it with: yogurt, fruit, vegetables, pickles, 100% juice, chocolate milk, whole grain buns, water, V8 juice, popsicles, apples and caramel, carrots, water, fruit snacks, 100 calorie packs, peanuts, sunflower seeds, milk, popcorn, graham crackers, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches

**Challenge:** Classroom parties are not healthy. **Solutions:**

- Send a note home to parents about bringing healthy food
- Ask people to bring: natural foods, low-fat foods, apple juice, tea, ants on a log, Subway parties, apples and peanut butter, trail mix, fruit pizza, 100% juice, cheese and crackers .

**Challenge:** Students not interested in team sports want to be active. **Solutions:**

- Go to a YMCA
- Get a bike
- Buy a Wii
- Participate in after-school programs
- Find something they like to do
- Take a pet on a walk
- Mow lawns
- Do physical activities other than video games
- Meet up with friends
- Exercise during commercials
- Try new kinds of sports
- Do chores

**Challenge:** Healthy lifestyles are not promoted at home. **Solutions:**

- Ask to go on a walk
- Provide parents with simple and healthy meal ideas
- Have families get together for healthy meals and physical activity
- Suggest options other than fast food
- Have health snacks at school conferences

*During October of 2010, Iowa Partners: Action for Healthy Kids, the Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Program, the Midwest Dairy Council, the Iowa Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition and Iowans Fit for Life sponsored four middle school Super Power summits throughout Iowa. The events helped youth discover the super powers inside of them by promoting nutritious eating and physical activity.*

