

Health Policy 201– food policy

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Food and health policy

- Food safety
 - Raw milk
- Hunger, food insecurity
 - Food deserts
 - Farmer's markets, supermarkets in low access areas
 - Encourage/pay small stores to carry fresh fruits and vegetables
- Obesity
 - Menu labeling
 - Soda tax
 - Food marketing
 - Physical education
 - Improve built environment to encourage physical activity
- Food pyramid
- School nutrition – farm to school, ketchup as a vegetable
- Genetically modified organisms
- Farm bill

Food and health policy

- Federal, state and local levels
- Tax policy
- Subsidies
- Benefit design
- Bricks and mortar – regulations,
- Regulation critical
 - Devil in the details
 - Can sabotage, ignore intent of law
- Enforcement
- **Only works if it happens in the real world**
 - A law by itself never made anyone any healthier

Food insecurity

- 36 million Americans do not have adequate access to food
 - 128,000 children in CT
- Can be insufficient access to food, unhealthy/low quality food, and/or lack of money to buy available food
- CT is last in the US in % schools with a breakfast program
- Every \$1 spent on WIC saves \$1.77 -\$3.13 in avoided health costs in first 60 days of life
- Policies to help
 - School breakfasts
 - Summer nutrition programs
 - Senior food programs – delivery to homes and in centers

Raw milk

- Food safety vs. public misinformation, taste
- Illness from bacteria vs. unsubstantiated claims of health benefits
 - That heat and pressure reduce enzymes that help break down food, pathogens, beneficial hormones, nutrients, vitamins
- Pasteurization required for all interstate sales of milk since 1987 by FDA, state laws vary
 - Federal government can only regulate interstate commerce
 - States regulate intrastate commerce
- Since then at least 147 cases of illness associated with raw milk
 - Including miscarriages, still births, kidney failure and deaths

State policies on raw milk

- In 2008, outbreak in CT due to E coli
 - Two toddlers on kidney dialysis
 - Bills to regulate, warning labels
- Fed.s can only regulate intrastate sales
- State laws, policies vary
- States can outlaw raw milk completely
 - CT laws among most lax in US
- Loopholes
 - Sell as pet food
 - Cowshares
- Lax regulations or no regulations
- Non-enforcement
- Bottom line: Laws are not the final word on policy

Menu labeling

- One third of calories eaten out in US
- Required under ACA in restaurants (over 20 locations) and vending machines this year
 - Calories only, other info available upon request
- Federal rule exempts bowling alleys, airplanes, movie theatres
 - Where food is not the primary business
- Lobbyists have delayed the final rule and implementation
 - Raise concerns about variation in food prep, meaning, balance of calories with nutrient value, etc.
 - Local zoning reg.s may limit size of menus for drive through restaurants
- Lobbyists accepted ACA provision because it pre-empts more restrictive local and state laws
- Impact unclear in states and cities that already have menu labeling

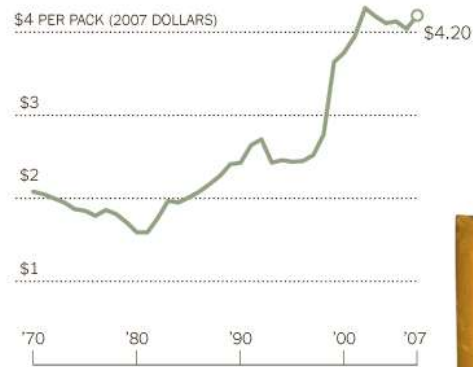
Soda tax

- Evidence linking obesity to soda
 - US calories from soda doubled 1977 to 2002
- Soda little to no nutritional value
- Heavily marketed to children
- Tobacco taxes very successful in reducing initiation of smoking among young
- Target price sensitive consumers, most likely to be young, low income – also most likely to be obese
- Soda, junk food cost and taxes less than inflation, making it cheaper food over time

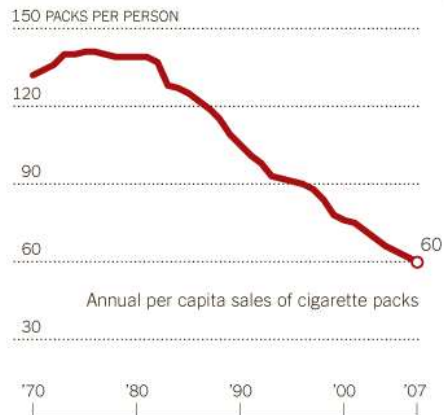
Tobacco taxes work

Meanwhile, Smoking Ebbs

Many factors have contributed to the decline of smoking in the U.S., including surging federal and state taxes. Here is the average U.S. retail price of a pack of cigarettes plus taxes.



U.S. cigarette consumption fell by about 57 percent from a peak in the mid-1970s to 2007.



Source: NY Times

Soda tax

- One cent tax per ounce would bring in \$13.2 billion/year US
 - \$146 million new taxes CT
- Obesity costs US \$166.2 billion/yr
- Could put funding toward subsidies for healthy food
- Could have major impact on state revenue declines
 - This is what passed tobacco tax increases in CT

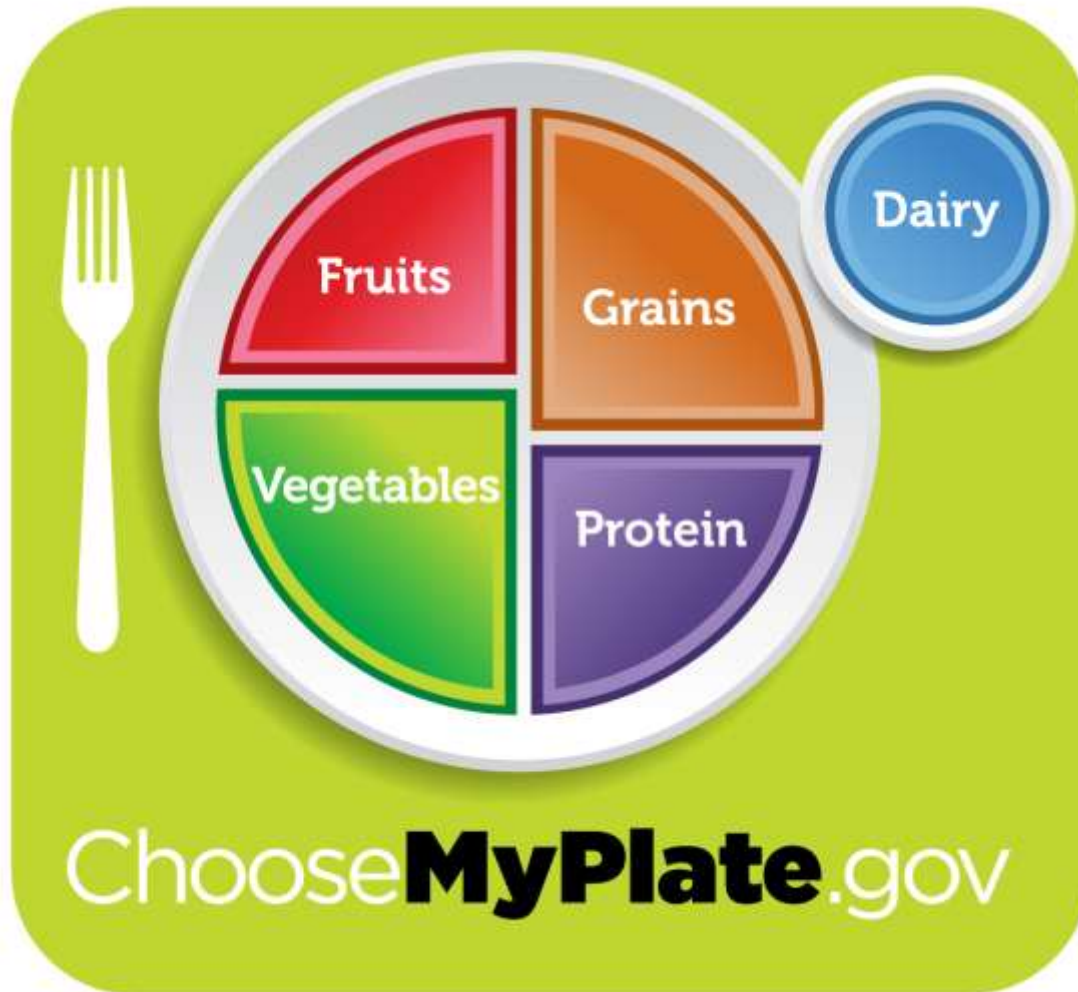
Food pyramid – the old one



Food pyramid – the new one



Food pyramid – the new new one



Food Inc.

<http://www.foodincmovie.com>

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