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Too Little Exercise, Rather Than Eating Too Much, Seen as Biggest Cause of Obesity

With the number of people who are overweight increasing rapidly and the nation facing an obesity epidemic, a huge majority (83%) of the public blames the increase on not enough exercise, according to the results of a new Harris Interactive poll conducted for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition. Only 34 percent of Americans chose caloric consumption as a major reason why obesity has increased.

Child Obesity

- Half of U.S. adults (53%) think that child obesity is increasing due to not enough exercise rather than eating the wrong foods (36%) or eating too much (7%).

Blaming TV Commercials or Restaurants

- Most Americans (89%) think that TV commercials encourage people to eat or drink more than is good for them (44% say "a lot," 45% say "some") while a tiny seven percent say there is no impact at all.
- A majority (55%) favors a requirement that restaurants label their menus, 28% oppose.

"We know that people consume more and more calories but only a third of the public see this as a major cause of obesity. These data suggest that many people are either in denial, or they are woefully ignorant, that most people just eat too much," says Humphrey Taylor, chairman of *The Harris Poll*® at Harris Interactive.

TABLE 1
Main Reasons People Believe Obesity Has Increased

"The number of people who are overweight and obese has been increasing rapidly. Which of these do you think are the *major reasons* why obesity has increased?"

Base: All Adults

	Total %
People do not exercise enough	83
People eat too much fast food	38
People consume too many calories	34
Food helpings are too big	32
People eat too much packaged and processed food	31

	Total %
People eat and drink too much between meals	18
People eat too much fat	14
People drink too many sodas	10
People eat too many carbohydrates	8
None of these	1
Not sure/No opinion	2

NOTE: Percentages reflect question allowing for up to three choices per respondent.

Health Care Poll

TABLE 2

Single Most Important Reason People Believe Child Obesity is Growing

“The number of children who are obese is growing rapidly. Which one of these do you think is the *single* most important reason?”

Base: All Adults

	Total
	%
They don't exercise enough	53
They eat the wrong foods	36
They eat too much	7
Not sure/No opinion	3

NOTE: Percentages may not add up exactly due to rounding.

TABLE 3

Impact of TV Commercials

“Most people see dozens of television commercials every day advertising food and drink. How much do you think this advertising encourages people to eat or drink more than is good for them?”

Base: All Adults

	Total
	%
A lot	44
Some	45
Not at all	7
Not sure	4

TABLE 4

Favor/Oppose Regulation Requiring Restaurants to Label Their Menus

“Would you favor or oppose a regulation requiring *restaurants* to include dietary information on their menus, like packaged foods, showing approximate numbers of calories, amounts of different types of fat, carbohydrates, salt, sugar, etc.?”

Base: All Adults

	Total
	%
Favor	55
Oppose	28
Not sure	18

NOTE: Percentages may not add up exactly due to rounding.

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.

Health Care Poll

Harris Interactive Methodology

This study was conducted online within the United States between March 29 and 31, 2004 among a nationwide cross section of 2,275 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. Harris Interactive estimates the results have a statistical precision of ± 3.0 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy.

Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (nonresponse), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data and screening (e.g., for likely voters). It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online sample was not a probability sample.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

About the Survey

The Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll is an exclusive poll that is published in the award-winning Health Industry Edition of The Wall Street Journal Online at www.wsj.com/health.

About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; www.dowjones.com), offers authoritative analysis, breaking news and commentary from top industry journalists. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web, with more than 689,000 subscribers world-wide. The Online Journal provides in-depth business news and financial information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with insight and analysis, including breaking business and technology news and analysis from around the world. It draws on the Dow Jones network of more than 1,500 reporters and editors – the largest staff of business and financial journalists in the world. For the second consecutive year in 2003, the Online Journal received a WebAward for the “Best Newspaper Web Site” and was also cited by Yahoo! Internet Life magazine as the “Best Business News” site (2002 & 2001).

About Dow Jones & Company

In addition to The Wall Street Journal and its international and online editions, Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; dowjones.com) also publishes Barron's and the Far Eastern Economic Review, Dow Jones Newswires, Dow Jones Indexes and the Ottaway group of community newspapers. Dow Jones is co-owner with Reuters Group of Factiva, with Hearst of SmartMoney and with NBC of the CNBC television operations in Asia and Europe. Dow Jones also provides news content to CNBC and radio stations in the U.S.



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About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive (www.harrisinteractive.com) is a worldwide market research and consulting firm best known for *The Harris Poll*[®], and for pioneering the Internet method to conduct scientifically accurate market research. Headquartered in Rochester, New York, Harris Interactive combines proprietary methodologies and technology with expertise in predictive, custom and strategic research. The Company conducts international research from its U.S. offices and through wholly owned subsidiaries—London-based **HI Europe** (www.hieurope.com), Paris-based **Novatris** and Tokyo-based **Harris Interactive Japan**—as well as through the Harris Interactive Global Network of independent market- and opinion-research firms. EOE M/F/D/V

To become a member of the Harris Poll OnlineSM and be invited to participate in future online surveys, visit www.harrispollonline.com.

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