The most widespread and daunting public health issue and concern in the U.S. of this decade, and likely many to follow, is obesity, particularly childhood obesity.

On the food supply side of the obesity equation exists a long list of inextricably connected, multidimensional problems that includes social injustices, corporate irresponsibility, animal rights and welfare abuses, and environmental sustainability – problems so complex, interconnected, and daunting as to make someone bury their head in the sand (or perhaps a vat of sugar, fat and salt). The Nutrition Studies group, led by Christopher Gardner, is attacking diet-related health problems and the underlying failed food systems that have led to these problems on two fronts.

**Strong Foundation of Federally Funded Human Nutrition Studies**
The first of these approaches is built on a strong foundation of 15 years of federally funded, randomized, controlled, human nutrition studies involving more than 1,700 study participants that have tested the potential health benefits of garlic, soy, omega-3 fats, antioxidants, ginkgo biloba, vegetarian diets, and low-carb vs. low-fat weight loss diets. Dr. Gardner and his colleagues and staff have built a strong national reputation for rigorously designed nutrition studies. He recently served on the American Heart Association’s Nutrition Committee, and now serves on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Culinary Institute of America.

**NEW INITIATIVE: Interdisciplinary Food Systems Research and Education Center**
A second and more recent initiative led by Dr. Gardner and colleagues has been to begin to develop a campus-wide interdisciplinary Stanford Food Systems Initiative. This initiative began in 2010 with the first Stanford Food Summit, and has continued with annual Food Summits since then (see http://foodsummit.stanford.edu). These five summits have connected faculty and students from all seven of Stanford’s schools (Medicine, Business, Law, Earth Sciences, Humanities and Sciences, Education and Engineering). The long-term objective is to build a world-class multidisciplinary research and teaching program at Stanford focused on developing and implementing solutions that address our nation’s failing food systems, including food production, distribution, and consumption, with an emphasis on Community-Based Participatory Research.