



Childhood Obesity



Statistics

Surveys have shown that obesity among children is on the rise. From 2003-2004 the amount of overweight children was found to increase drastically.

- ❑ *The amount of children who were overweight from 2-5 years of age increased from 5% to 13.9%.*
- ❑ *The amount of children who were overweight from 6-11 years increased from 6.5% to 18.8%*
- ❑ *The amount of children who were overweight from 12-19 years increased from 5% to 17.4%¹*

Causes

There are a number of causes that can be linked to the rise in weight of children. A child's environment, behaviors and genes can influence their weight. Some children's weight may be increased by:

- ❑ Large portion sizes
- ❑ Intake of high calorie foods
- ❑ Low amounts of physical activity
- ❑ Media advertisement geared to children
- ❑ Intake of high calorie beverages
- ❑ The increased need for quick, convenient meals

Health Risks for Overweight Children

An increase in weight comes with an increased risk of diseases. These include:

- ❑ Asthma
- ❑ Type 2 Diabetes
- ❑ High Blood Pressure
- ❑ Heart Disease
- ❑ High Cholesterol
- ❑ Sleep Apnea
- ❑ Intestinal Issues
- ❑ Psychological Problems such as low self-esteem or depression

¹ CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Overweight Prevalence. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/childhood/prevalence.htm>. Accessed August 8, 2007.

Parents Can Take Action!

- ❑ Healthy eating should be a family effort. Try to have the whole family eat healthy meals together.
- ❑ When eating out, choose lower calorie options, foods that are grilled instead of fried, and smaller portion sizes.
- ❑ Remember you are a role model. Eat plenty of healthy whole grain products, fruits and vegetables and drink low-fat milk. Your child is watching!
- ❑ Keep healthy snacks on hand. Pre-pack portion sizes of dried fruits, trail mix, veggie sticks, pretzels, graham crackers or string cheese.
- ❑ Buy less sugary beverages such as soda and juice.
- ❑ Let your children help plan and make dinner.
- ❑ Move! Take bike rides, walk or play sports together instead of sitting in front of the TV or computer.

*Visit your pediatrician if you are concerned you're child may be at an unhealthy weight. Your child should be plotted on a growth chart to determine his or her healthy weight for height and age at your visit.

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