

## Kids' Obesity May Lead to Epidemic of Adult Diabetes

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TUESDAY, July 8 (HealthDay News) -- The current childhood obesity epidemic in the United States may lead to large numbers of young adults developing type 2 diabetes in the future, along with serious diabetes-related health complications, warns a University of Michigan researcher.

"The full impact of the childhood obesity epidemic has yet to be seen, because it can take up to 10 years or longer for obese individuals to develop type 2 diabetes. Children who are obese today are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes as young adults," Dr. Joyce Lee, a pediatric endocrinologist at the university's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, said in a prepared statement.

The longer a person has diabetes, the more likely he or she is to develop serious complications such as kidney failure and blindness, Lee noted. That means that young adults with type 2 diabetes are much more likely to develop such complications during their lifetime than older people with the disease. She added that babies born to young women with type 2 diabetes are at greater risk for obesity and type 2 diabetes.

"Recent studies suggest that there have been dramatic increases in type 2 diabetes among individuals in their 20s and 30s, whereas it used to be that individuals developed type 2 diabetes in their late 50s or 60s. This may be the first indication of a type 2 diabetes epidemic among young adults who were obese during childhood," Lee said.

More needs to be done to fight childhood obesity, she urged in an article in the July issue of the journal *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine*.

"Our society heavily invests in the treatment and management of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes for adults. But it spends very little for the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity to stave off the onset of type 2 diabetes," Lee said.

"If there isn't a significant investment in obesity prevention and treatment during childhood within schools, communities, and the health care system, recent trends in childhood obesity will likely lead to increases in type 2 diabetes among young adults, resulting in even greater costs to society and the health care system."

Toward that end, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on Monday issued new cholesterol screening and treatment recommendations for children, including prescribing cholesterol-reducing drugs known as statins for some 8-year-olds.

The group also urged screening for young patients whose family history is unknown or those who have other heart disease risk factors including obesity, high blood pressure or diabetes. Screening, the AAP said, should take place after age 2, but no later than age 10.

### More information

The Nemours Foundation has more about [overweight and obese children](#).

SOURCE: University of Michigan Health System, news release, July 7, 2008

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