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Obesity Number 1 Health Concern For Kids

Southfield (WWJ) -- It's obesity, stupid. That's issue number one for kid's health, according to a new report released by the University of Michigan C.S. Children's Hospital National Poll.

Thirty-five percent of adults surveyed ranked obesity as the biggest health risk facing kids.

The poll suggests that obesity is the number one health risk for kids, topping smoking and drug abuse. Among other top finishers, the poll showed that bullying, Internet safety and teen pregnancy rank among the nation's top health concerns for kids.

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Here's the top ten health concerns from the hospital poll:

1. Childhood obesity. Thirty-five percent of adults ranked childhood obesity as their top overall health concern for children. In 2007, it was ranked No. 3. Although other research has shown that Hispanic youth are at greater risk for obesity, this problem was rated lower by Hispanic adults than white adults and black adults.
2. Drug abuse. Drug abuse is viewed as a bigger health concern among Hispanic adults (50 percent) than white adults (29 percent) and black (35 percent) adults. It also was more likely to be listed as a top health concern among adults with lower incomes.
3. Smoking. Ranked No. 1 in 2007, smoking now holds the No. 3 position in 2008, with 32 percent of U.S. adults rating it as a major overall health concern. Among Hispanic adults, however, smoking is still rated as the No. 1 health concern for kids (52 percent).
4. Bullying. New to this year's list, bullying was rated highly by both adults with and without children in their homes. Adults from middle-income households were more likely than adults with lower-income or higher-income households to rate bullying as big problem.

5. Internet safety. Adults with household incomes of \$100,000 or more per year were more likely to view Internet safety as a big problem for children in their community. Overall, 27 percent of adults polled rated Internet safety as big health concern for kids.

6. Child abuse and neglect. This issue, which was ranked No. 10 in 2007, was rated as a top health concern for kids among 25 percent of adults polled.

7. Teen pregnancy. Black adults continue to rate teen pregnancy as the top health concern for youth in their community, with 35 percent reporting it's a major health concern compared with only 21 percent of white adults and 33 percent of Hispanic adults.

8. Alcohol abuse. For the 2008 poll, 23 percent of adults listed alcohol abuse as a health concern for kids. In 2007, alcohol abuse was ranked fourth overall.

9 (tie). Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. AD/HD, also new to this year's list, was a much greater concern among adults with low-income households than adults with middle-income and high-income households. Overall, 21 percent of adults polled rated it as a health concern for kids.

Sexually transmitted infection. Sexually transmitted infections among youths continue to be considered a big problem affecting children's health, with 21 percent of adults rating it as a top health concern. This issue also was ranked ninth in 2007.

10 (tie). Chemicals in the environment. The issue of environmental toxins was added to this year's list, largely due to concerns among Hispanic adults and adults with low-income households. More than 30 percent of Hispanic adults and 25 percent of adults in the lowest income group felt environmental toxins in their communities pose a threat to children's health.

Not enough opportunities for physical activity. "Having this issue among the 2008 top 10 health concerns underscores the importance placed on childhood obesity as a major problem in adults' minds," notes Davis. Nineteen percent of adults rated this issue as a top health concern.

Issues that did not rank among the top 10 overall health concerns, but were included in the National Poll on Children's Health include: driving accidents, depression, asthma, eating disorders, neighborhood safety, school violence, autism and suicide.

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