

Childhood Obesity

APRIL 2021

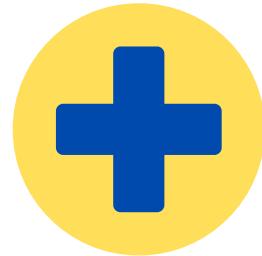


Kathryn Glinter
Patient Food and Nutrition Services
300 N. Ingalls Street
NIB NI8E20
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5407
(734) 936-5197

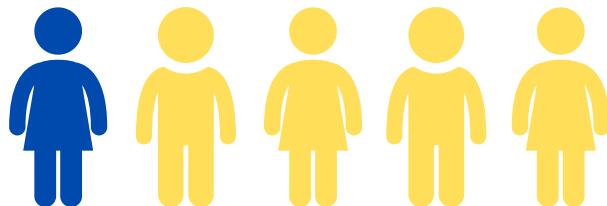
Why childhood obesity matters



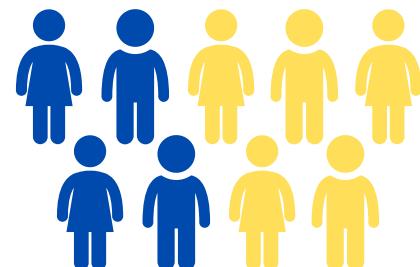
Obesity disproportionately impacts individuals of lower socioeconomic status, as well as Hispanics and African Americans.



Obesity increases risk of many health conditions: diabetes, heart disease, sleep apnea, certain cancers, and more.



The CDC reports that childhood obesity impacts almost **1 out of 5** children (18.5%) in the U.S.



Childhood obesity increases likelihood of adulthood obesity: **~44%** of obese children become obese adults



Children with obesity may experience impaired mental well-being (e.g. depression, anxiety, etc.)



While it may be challenging, **parents can take action** to decrease the risk of their children developing obesity.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO



Limit kids' consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting children's added sugar consumption to 10% of total daily calories. Parents can do this by restricting sugar-sweetened beverages, the most common source of added sugar in children's diets. Kids should have less than 25 grams (g) of added sugar per day. An 8 oz glass of orange juice has 22 g of added sugar and a can of pop has 65 g of added sugar. Consider limiting your child's sugar-sweetened beverages by switching them to flavored water instead.



Introduce fruits & veggies early in childhood

Studies correlate increased consumption of fruits & veggies with decreased body fat percentage. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends 1-2 cups of fruit and 1-3 cups of veggies per day, and most kids don't eat that much. Introducing fruits & veggies early can increase consumption, which can help reduce risk of childhood obesity. Try introducing your kids to fruits & veggies early in life, as early as 7-8 months old. Children under 2 years old are more receptive to new foods than older children.



Encourage regular physical activity

3- to 5-year-olds should be active throughout the day and 6- to 17-year-olds should get at least 1 hour of daily physical activity. Children's physical activity levels have gradually declined over the years, in part due to increased screen time. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time before 2 years old, and then limiting television, computer, and video game time to less than 2 hours per day. Consider limiting your children's screen time to make more time for physical activity. Even better, try to find fun and active things to do as a family!

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO



Model healthy habits for your children

Children tend to simulate the habits they observe from their parents. Your children are more likely to be more physically active and make healthier food choices if they see you doing the same. Incorporate exercise, whole grains, fruits, and veggies into your own routine. Practice cooking together with your children to inspire them, and find physically active things to do as a family.



Allow your children to listen to their hunger cues

Studies have shown Americans are eating bigger portion sizes than in the past. Teaching your kids about appropriate portion sizes can help them establish healthy habits when they're young. Talk to your children about the difference between feeling hungry vs. full. Allow them to stop eating when they say they feel full, even if there is still food on their plates. As they get older, discuss the difference between eating out of boredom or stress vs. out of hunger. Listening to their bodies can help minimize overeating.



Modify the language at home surrounding weight & body image

Body image is how you feel about your body. The way parents speak about their own body image and issues of weight loss/gain can influence their children's body image. Try to modify the language used at home to promote a positive body image. Focus on talking about health rather than appearance. Talk to your children about building strong, capable bodies as opposed to looking attractive.

Healthier "Swap-tions" for Your Child's Lunch



1

2

3

4

5



Healthier "Swap-tions" for Your Child's Lunch

1

Use flavored water packets with water vs. juice boxes

This decreases added sugar in your child's daily diet

2

Send fresh fruit slices (or fruit packed in juice) vs. fruit packed in syrup

This will also decrease your child's daily added sugar intake.

3

Pack whole grain crackers vs. chips

Whole grain crackers instead of chips or cookies will increase whole grain consumption, providing more fiber and protein for your child.

4

Use whole wheat bread for sandwiches vs. white bread

This will also increase your child's daily intake of whole grains to get more fiber, protein, and other vitamins & minerals

5

Make turkey or ham sandwiches vs. PB&J

This increases your child's protein and iron intake while decreasing added sugar consumption.

REFERENCES

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. (2018, August 15). Kids and Portion Control. Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate. <https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/dietary-guidelines-and-myplate/kids-and-portion-control>
- Center for Disease Control (CDC). (2019, June 24). Childhood Obesity Facts . Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>
- Finer, N. (2015). Medical consequences of obesity. In Medicine (United Kingdom) (Vol. 43, Issue 2, pp. 88–93). Elsevier Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mpmed.2014.11.003>
- Keller, A., & Bucher Della Torre, S. (2015). Sugar-sweetened beverages and obesity among children and adolescents: A review of systematic literature reviews. *Childhood Obesity*, 11(4), 338–346. <https://doi.org/10.1089/chi.2014.0117>
- Lyness, D. (2018, June). Encouraging a Healthy Body Image. KidsHealth (for Parents). <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/body-image.html>
- Mayo Clinic. (2019, June 20). Screen time and children: How to guide your child. Healthy Lifestyle: Children's Health. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>
- Simmonds, M., Llewellyn, A., Owen, C. G., & Woolacott, N. (2016). Predicting adult obesity from childhood obesity: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Obesity Reviews*, 17(2), 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.12334>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020). Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9(1), 160–164. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/34.1.121>
- Vos, M. B., Kaar, J. L., Welsh, J. A., Van Horn, L. V., Feig, D. I., Anderson, C. A. M., Patel, M. J., Cruz Munos, J., Krebs, N. F., Xanthakos, S. A., & Johnson, R. K. (2017). Added sugars and cardiovascular disease risk in children: A scientific statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*, 135(19), e1017–e1034. <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000439>