



Childhood Obesity

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the rate of childhood obesity for children ages 6-11 years old has more than doubled in the past 20 years, going from 6.5% in 1980 to 17% in 2006⁽¹⁾. The percentage of overweight children in the U.S. is growing at an alarming rate with 1 out of every 3 children now considered overweight or obese⁽²⁾.

Doctors are concerned about the rise in childhood obesity rates. Overweight children are at increased risk for developing serious medical problems that were once considered exclusively adult diseases, such as^(1, 2):

- Heart disease (high blood pressure and high cholesterol)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Bone and joint problems
- Asthma
- Sleep apnea
- Tendency to mature earlier
- Liver and gallbladder disease
- Depression

Healthy eating and physical activity are extremely important for your child's well being. You can help your child maintain a healthy weight by balancing the calories they consume from foods and beverages

with the calories they burn through physical activity and normal growth⁽¹⁾. Here are some ways parents can encourage healthy lifestyle choices⁽³⁾:

- Serve more fruits and vegetables
- Buy less high calorie drinks and snacks
- Serve breakfast everyday
- Eat fast food less often
- Substitute water for high calorie drinks
- Plan healthy meals and eat as a family

As children spend more time in front of the television and less time running and playing outdoors, exercise becomes increasingly important. Most children need at least one hour of physical activity every day. Some ways to keep your child *active* include⁽³⁾:

- Limit television, video games and computer time
- Exercise together as a family
- Get involved in competitive sports
- Encourage walking or biking to school
- Try dancing, bowling, or yoga activities

For more information on childhood obesity and ways to live a healthier lifestyle, please visit the following web-links:

Healthy Lifestyle Information:

- [Healthy Eating for a Healthy Weight](#)
- [Body and Mind Games](#)
- [Superkid Heroes](#)

References:

1. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
2. [KidsHealth](#)
3. [U.S National Library of Medicine and the National Institute of Health](#)

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