

Childhood obesity and it's prevention.

[Food & Diet](#), [Junk Food](#)



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Childhood Obesity And It's Prevention. Childhood Obesity is the excess weight gain of a child who intakes unhealthy food more than required, causing an unhealthy lifestyle and wellbeing. Childhood Obesity is one of the main issues of today's growing society, which is rapidly growing since 1970 to 2012 from a number of 100 million to 500 million. It is expected that nearly half of the world's population will be considered obese by 2030 (Abc. net, Obesity 2012). Childhood Obesity is becoming a very serious condition due to decrease of physical activity in children at a very young age and the increase of psychological and physiological risks. In Australia, the incidence of obesity has increased significantly in the past 20 years especially in young aged people (Taylor et al, 2011). This isn't the case in only Australia but worldwide. Some of the top countries that are believed to have a high obesity rate are India with over 52 million people expected to be obese by 2030, China with Teen Diabetes 4x USA, Brazil with +50% overweight or obese and Mexico with the most highest rate of +70% overweight. Mexico is one of the main countries which is targeted to be the fattest country in the world at this stage (Abc. net, Obesity 2012). Australia is considered to be the next growing fattest country in lead after America. Australian adult have an overweight rate of 42. 1% in males and 30. 9% in females and a rate of 25. 6% for males and 24% for females who are obese as adults since 2007-08 (Health. gov, 2008). Where as, globally there is a rate of over 200 million men and 300 million women with obesity. This contributes to the fact that around 65% of the world's population live in countries where overweight and obesity kill more people than underweight (Who. int, 2012). Overweight and obesity is one of the top 5th leading global death issues, around 2. 8 million

adults die each year due to this (Who. int 2012). Although, adult rates are high, childhood obesity rates are not far off. Childhood obesity trends have increased in America by nearly 60% between the age of 6 -19 yet is still expected to rapidly increase. European children have a rising trend rate of obesity but not as high as American children. Asian children have a lower risk of becoming obese, although still at risk of future obesity problems. However, Europe and Asia have higher adult obesity rates than children obesity rates (Hsph. harvard. edu, 2010). The reasons for these may also have an involvement to genetics or background culture. These facts show that not only children worldwide are suffering from bad capability to keep a healthy weight and lifestyle but so are the parents of these children. Adults who have an unhealthy diet and an un-regular or no excises routine in their daily lives are most likely to pass down these unhealthy habits to their children. Many factors could contribute to the high rise of obesity rates worldwide. Some of the factors which are considered to be a contribution to obesity are energy imbalances in the body, genetics. Energy imbalances contribute to obesity due to the fat consumption increasing while physical activity is decreasing. Children are consuming more variety of foods with high carbohydrates which they are not burning off by doing some type of physical activity; therefore it is getting stored as fat which is not being used resulting the built up of becoming obese or overweight. Genetics is also a well talked about issue, Struan Grant of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and colleagues says that “ there is indeed a genetic signature of childhood obesity" (News-medical. net 2012). It is researched that chromosome 13 and chromosome 17 are related to childhood obesity,

according to WebMD health news chromosome 13 increases a child's obesity risk by 22 percent. However, babies born with this gene does not mean they are genetically at risk of being obese due to having a healthy lifestyle as an important factor it can reduces the genetic risk of being obese in future (Ryan Jaslow, Cbsnews. com 2012). Children's diet and lack of physical activity is a concern to our society, our children of this generation spend more time infront of TVs and computers than playing outdoors, bike riding, swimming and more. Children are not aware of the chronic diseases that an unhealthy diet and a lack of physical activity can cause. Marketing of junk foods is one of the main big reasons of child obesity. This becomes a factor which contributes to the obesity of our children's future. In today's society it is much cheaper to buy junk food than it is to buy much healthier food and by advertising and marketing well known junk food companies on TV where most children spend most of their time, it is most likely that they are going to catch children's eyes on their deals and the meals they offer for kids. Also marketing good deals for junk food at such a low price with a good quantity which tastes great, making people choose this as an alternative from home cooked healthier food for their children, due to it saves time and effort. Junk food is not only advertised or caught attention on ads from TV but also from catalogues of big stores such as Safeway and Coles, making sure more junk food sales are advertised that healthier food options which then parents will buy for their children. While shopping in food stores, the companies make sure that the candies, chocolates, drinks and other junk food items are stored in the lower isle of the store for children's eyes to see. Marketing of junk food by companies is not done in one area of the world but is done all

throughout the world no matter what socioeconomic level it is. Such as, McDonalds which is now known and famous worldwide, for the companies to promote its food and make it much well known it changes its menu to suit the environment it is around. For example McDonalds and KFC in India are the same as here in Australia however the menu is not exactly the same, there are more spices added for flavoring to suit the costumers, rice is also added to the menu and the price compared to Australia dollars is much cheaper and affordable for the Indian population. By this issue children and adults are more desired to take away junk food than home cooked food.

Environmental factors are also related to childhood obesity, due to spending most of their childhood outdoors in environments such as schools, childcare and community where they are taught about healthy eating and have weekly physical activity routines yet there is a problem that occurs for children to keep going with this healthy lifestyle choice. Children at schools, childcares and more have a hard time getting access to healthy food options therefore have no choice but to choose unhealthy food from their canteens such as pizza, lasagna and sausage rolls instead of salad sandwiches, baked fish etc. Canteens at such areas as these also seem to display unhealthy options more appealingly than healthy options, changing children's minds from healthy to unhealthy within seconds so easily. (Ext. colostate. edu, 2003).

Children suffering from obesity at such a young age can go through long and short-term health consequences. Long-term consequences can be life threatening and sometimes un-curable. Diabetes, Asthma, Cholesterol, Heart attack and Stroke are all examples of long term consequences that are very dangerous to one. Being obese can cause asthma which is shortening of

breaths making it difficult for children to breathe due to their weight. Cholesterol, heart attacks and strokes are caused by the consumption of fatty foods by children which ends up building up in your bodies' arteries not allowing blood to flow properly. Diabetes in young children is when insulin in the body is not produced correctly this is usually caused by over body weight. The short term consequences for childhood obesity are low self-esteem, negative self-image and psychosocial (Mydr. com. au 2007). Many children experience bullying and harassment throughout their school lives and other moments of their lives due to being overweight and obese. This can affect children's studies, health, social skills, mental and psychological development. However short term obesity problems can turn into long term consequences if no changes are made in children physically and mentally. Many children go through depression and attempt to suicide due to not being satisfied with themselves, this being a concern to parents of unhealthy children. Beings Obese is not a cheap lifestyle to live, neither is it cheap for others in the society when ones obese. As for there are many direct medical costs related to obesity, regular medical check-ups are required due to having more than one disease in a person who is suffering obesity, as discussed above. Usually people of today's humanity are judged and accepted by the way they look, making it hard for such people to make a living. David Allison, an obesity researcher at the University of Alabama at Birmingham says " Obese people are less likely to be given jobs, they're waited on more slowly, they're less likely to be given apartments, and they're less likely to be sent to college by their parents" (Forbes, 2006). For example in support of David Allison statement, obese people are not hired

due to not being able to work efficiently and have a higher chance of taking more sick leaves and holidays than average people, making it harder for the society or the company to make up for one less employee. Employers look at appearance when selecting employees and refuse to employ people who are obese or overweight for the fact that it may cause an impact on the company's image and what they signify. As for being overweight or obese suffering with diseases, there are less people who are in the society working, therefore the government is paying for them to be at home doing nothing, and this makes a huge burden on our society. Last but not least, food expenditure that is made by obese or overweight people is enormous, since they daily require more than average people and the daily recommended food chart. For the large appetite and the desires of different fast foods, makes a huge difference to an obese person's daily cost compared to a healthy person who eats freshly home cooked food with a variety of vegetables due to marketing prices of processed foods compared to fresh foods. In this manner obese and overweight people are spending way more on food they eat, including loans they take to cure the current diseases they are suffering caused by obesity which makes it so hard for them to pay back the bank with no job, therefore the government is responsible for their health and expenditure. The government's role in fighting childhood obesity is put in more through school based activities. Schools throughout Australia and others worldwide have started bringing a healthy lifestyle into play within primary school children, teaching them what is healthy and what is not, how to read the nutrition facts on food and how to keep physically active at all times. This is bringing awareness to our growing children to make healthier

and safer choices in life. Campaigns like Fresh Tastes @ School, Jump Rope For Heart, Go For 2&5, Live Life Well @ School and Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation all aim to make a change in our society and to prevent the increasing numbers of obesity in future (Healthykids, 2007). They promote healthy lifestyles to children at schools by making them involved in physical activities to raise money, speeches, workshops, cooking classes, planting vegetables and more activities which require hands on, making children more interested and aware. Schools are also starting to make a contribution by making changes in their school canteen menu, helping children make healthier selections and to also help the prevention of obesity. Another part that schools have always done to prevent obesity is by having weekly PE classes as a compulsory subject in school, this lets the children always stay active, with a add on of interschool sports, swimming carnival and sports day. Although schools have contributed in such a big positive way, parents of these children are the main problem. Parents are themselves un-educated about healthy choices to make; therefore what is cooked at home is only building up to obesity within their children. Barbara Dennison, an associate professor of clinical pediatrics at Columbia University, found that parents of overweight children treat mealtime differently than parents of healthy children, often allowing the child to choose the meal – typically something less nutritious. Some parents even used sweets to encourage their child to finish a meal (Msnbc. msn. com, 2004). Parents are the biggest role models to their children and should consider changing their lifestyle, so the children learn from them but this is usually very unlikely to happen due to tradition and culture families are brought up in and follow. As

prevention to this fast growing disease through our adults and children the only combat to defeat the rising junk food marketing tactics are to make our children as a parent more interested in outdoor activities for example like playing soccer, swimming, tennis, going for walks/runs, cooking, craft and lots more rather than indoor or TV related. Being more involved with our children and spending time with them, doing what interests them the most is what will keep them away from such things as TV and computers where most junk food advertising are marketed. From this way children are more active at young ages and will also be away from desiring advertisements on TV, which is increasing the growth of our unhealthy society. This may not be the same case for people who live a low socioeconomic life, due to not being able to afford outdoor activities for their children, in this circumstance low socioeconomic people could choose other alternatives that don't require joining their children into sporting clubs, but instead have a casual play time for an hour or two in the backyard together. These small changes in our lives that we pass on to our children could make them better people emotionally, physically and mentally in future. References: Abc. net. au (2012) - Globesity - Fat's New Frontier - Foreign Correspondent - ABC. [online] Available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2012/s3547707.htm> [Accessed: 13 Sep 2012]. Cbsnews. com (2012) Childhood obesity genes identified, scientists say - HealthPop - CBS News. [online] Available at: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-504763_162-57411270-10391704/childhood-obesity-genes-identified-scientists-say/ [Accessed: 19 Sep 2012]. Ext. colostate. edu (2003) Childhood Obesity. [online] Available at: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09317.html> [Accessed: 18 Sep 2012]. Forbes (2006) The

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