

Problem with childhood obesity

[Nutrition](#), [Fast Food](#)



Problem with Childhood Obesity Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. As a result, children are at increased risk for myriad preventable acute and chronic medical problems. Many of which are associated with increased morbidity and mortality. In addition, childhood obesity has serious psychosocial consequences, such as low self-esteem, lower quality of life, and depression (KidsHealth). Many social and environmental factors have negatively influenced the physical activity and eating behaviors of US children and adolescents. Financial and time pressures force many families to minimize food costs and meal preparation time, resulting in increased consumption of prepackaged convenience foods that are high in calories and fat (Children's Health). In fact, fast-food restaurants are often around neighborhoods containing schools and therefore they have young customers (Obesity Action Coalition). Children are also the targets of junk food advertisements. As a result of these and many other factors, childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions. Since the 1970s, the rate of obesity has more than doubled among US children aged between 2 to 5 years (KidsHealth). Meanwhile, the number of obese children has tripled among youth aged between 6 to 11 years and doubled among those aged 12 to 16 years (CDC). According to the Institute of Medicine, more than 9 million children and young adults older than 6 years are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity increases the risk of multiple acute and chronic medical problems as well as psychological issues, all of which can persist into adulthood and adversely affect quality of life (KidsHealth). Obese children can suffer from orthopedic complications, including abnormal bone growth, degenerative disease, and pain. They are also more likely to

have low self-esteem, leading to depression and suicidal ideation, and to engage in substance abuse. One study suggested that obese children might have a similar quality of life as children with cancer. Health issues related to obesity are also linked with decreased life expectancy (KidsHealth). The estimated 9 million overweight children or obese children are at higher risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer, asthma and other pulmonary diseases, high cholesterol, elevated blood pressure, stroke, and other chronic illnesses. Compared with children at a normal weight, overweight children are 70% to 80% more likely to be overweight in adulthood (Children's Health). Obesity among children and adolescents is spreading across lines of race, gender, and socioeconomic status, but the greatest increase in prevalence is currently seen among African American, Hispanic, and Native American children. In contrast to the 13% of white overweight youth, 24% of African American, 24% of Mexican American, and 20% of non-Hispanic African American adolescents are overweight. An estimated 39% of Native American youth are at risk of being overweight (Children's Health). The prevalence of obesity is particularly high among Mexican American males and African American females. Obese children are five times more likely to avoid participating in sports and other school activities and have lower emotional, social, and school functioning. Societal factors also play a role in childhood obesity. Many urban neighborhoods do not have supermarkets, outdoor produce stands, or other healthy alternatives to convenience stores and fast food outlets, making it harder for residents to purchase fresh and inexpensive produce. Inner city neighborhoods have fewer open spaces for physical activity, more traffic on streets, and more

violence Children's Health). All of this often causes parents to keep their children inside where computers, video games, and television offer sedentary entertainment (Obesity Action Coalition). In addition, neighborhoods across the United States increased dependence on cars for public transportation and fewer sidewalks, trails, parks, and paths for walking and biking. The CDC reports that high school students' daily participation in physical education has declined 30% in the past decade. For example, in 2005, only 45% of ninth grade and 22% of 12th grade students attended daily physical education classes (CDC). Such limited physical activity during and after school contributes to childhood obesity. Such low levels of physical activity have been shown to contribute to obesity and consequent circulatory problems. Children in schools with more frequent physical education activity were more likely to have normal body weight. However, some studies have suggested that physical education classes are not enough to curb childhood obesity. Instead, children's lifestyles must change. Studies suggest that increased afterschool activity outdoors in parks or sport facilities may be more effective in preventing childhood obesity (Obesity Action Coalition). Children spend an average of 5.5 hours per day using various media and are exposed to an average of one food commercial every 5 minutes (CDC). Most of those commercials are for candy, high sugar cereals, and fast food. Fast-food outlets alone spend \$3 billion per year in advertisements targeted toward children (CDC).. Furthermore, many of the advertising and marketing campaigns enlist children's favorite TV and movie characters. In addition, the report of CDC also highlights ways media can play a positive role in helping to reduce childhood obesity, through programs that encourage children to be

active and help teach good nutrition, through public education campaigns aimed at children and parents, and by using popular media characters to promote healthier food options to children (CDC). " The health implications of childhood obesity are staggering," says Vice President Vicky Rideout (Obesity Action Coalition). The way out of Child obesity should start with media; if media get kids more into learning about health issues they are more likely to do something about it. If childhood obesity has serious psychosocial consequences, such as low self-esteem, lower quality of life, and depression. The media need to target these areas about turn them to positives out looks on physical actives. Work cited Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 19 Feb. 2013. Web. 18 Apr. 2013. Website " Children's Health." Preventing Obesity in Children, Causes of Child Obesity, and More. N. p., n. d. Web. 19 Apr. 2013. Website " KidsHealth." Overweight and Obesity. N. p., n. d. Web. 20 Apr. 2013. Website " Obesity Action Coalition » Childhood Obesity — Causes and Considerations." Obesity Action Coalition Childhood Obesity Causes and Considerations Comments. N. p., n. d. Web. 19 Apr. 2013. Website