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Childhood Obesity” The rise of childhood obesity has placed the health of an entire generation at risk” (http://www.azquotes.com/author/15095-Tom_Vilsack), said secretary of agriculture, Tom Vilsack. Childhood obesity has become a considerable issue that can and will be detrimental to many children and their health later on in life. It is an epidemic that has been steadily increasing over the years. The widespread outbreak of childhood obesity is extremely unhealthy as well as unsafe. Obese children are “ more likely to develop non-communicable diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age” (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4408699/>), as well as insulin resistance, asthma, sleep apnea and other health issues.

Obesity is growing dangerously fast in the United States. Childhood obesity affect over 4.5 million children and puts them at risk for health issues, many of which are associated with depreciated life expectancy. Obesity can be seen simply as weight gain, and although this is true, it is also much more than that. Obesity is a medical condition. Such drastic and massive weight gain comes with consequences.

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In order to see what percentage of someone's body is fat, there are several tests that can be executed. The most common methods are " techniques such as BMI, or body mass index, waist circumference, and skin-fold thickness" ([https://www.ncbi.](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4408699/)

[nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4408699/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4408699/)). Children require a healthy diet and active lifestyle in order to grow and mature properly.

Obesity prevents children from growing stronger and developing into young adults as they should. Healthy lifestyles are becoming scarcer as time progresses and as technology advances, people are no longer required to do work. The culture, especially in America, is fast-paced while demanding minimal effort. It is a societal goal to get the most work done with the least amount of effort. Society is becoming inactive and lazy.

People would prefer to drive to the coffee shop around the corner rather than take a five-minute walk. This type of culture aids in the growth of this frightening epidemic. Close to 20% of children between the ages of two and nineteen are obese, and although the rates in recent years have slowed, the numbers are still on the rise. ([https://stateofobesity.](https://stateofobesity.org/childhood-obesity-trends/)

[org/childhood-obesity-trends/](https://stateofobesity.org/childhood-obesity-trends/)) Although obesity in children is an unmistakable dilemma, it is often a misunderstood concept. Many blame extensive weight gain only on the number of calories one is eating, however, obesity can be brought about by a plethora of causes - surroundings, genetics, lifestyle, or even culture. Children are bombarded with unhealthy foods and new and improved ways to increase lethargy every day. Schools sell candy, carbs, and cans of soda. Physical education is only required once (<https://assignbuster.com/https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/pmc3278864-active-lifestyle-in-order-to-grow-and/>

or twice a week in many schools and often times, active exercise is replaced with a game of stand-still dodgeball. Children are often times put in situations that discourage health and fitness. Not only are lifestyle and culture causes of weight gain, genetics are also a factor in childhood obesity. Some children, however, might merely be cursed with unfortunate genetics where easy weight gain is part of their make-up, however, genetics is not the leading cause of childhood obesity.

The leading cause of childhood obesity is the lifestyle of so many families. In many cases, a lifestyle change would make a colossal difference in one's weight. Lifestyle and culture go hand in hand.

The American culture of getting what one wants when they want it only adds to the lack of a healthy lifestyle. Simply taking a few extra minutes to walk more often, take the stairs as opposed to the elevator, ride a bicycle to school rather than the bus, or eat fewer desserts would be a start to a fitter life and lower health risks. Not only does obesity affect children's health physically, but it can also affect them emotionally or mentally. Many obese children struggle with low self-esteem, depression, and lower quality of life. (<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010=psycdsp>)

Although these are worrisome ramifications, the physical health consequences are far more alarming. These health risks can be detrimental to children especially after they have grown, as many of the effects lead to a declining life span. These circumstances "include, but are not limited to, fatty liver disease, sleep apnea, Type 2 diabetes, asthma, hepatic steatosis (fatty liver disease),

cardiovascular disease, highcholesterol, cholelithiasis (gallstones), glucose intolerance and insulinresistance, skin conditions, menstrual abnormalities, impaired balance, andorthopedic problems” (<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1010=psycdsp>).

The top three reoccurring medical worries are diabetes, sleep apnea, and cardiovascular disease. As more extensive research is surfacing, it has been proven that children are beginning to experience these conditions at a young age. The question that needs to be addressed while regarding childhood obesity is: who is to blame?