

# Obesity

[Health & Medicine](#), [Obesity](#)



Today, approximately 25 percent of children and teenagers are obese and the number is on the rise. Since the 1960's childhood obesity has increased by 54 percent in children ages six to eleven. In children twelve to seventeen it has increased by 39 percent. (Silberstein, 1) Childhood obesity is so prevalent among these age groups that it has reached epidemic proportions. One cause of childhood obesity is genetics. Children who have parents or siblings who are overweight have an increased risk of becoming obese themselves. Genetics accounts for approximately 25 percent to 40 percent to childhood obesity. (Causes of Obesity, 2) Although genetics is a significant factor, diet and lifestyle also play an important role in the increase of childhood obesity. . Consumption of soft drinks has an impact on childhood obesity. According to France Ellisle from France's Institute of Health and Medical Research, there is a direct connection between weight gain and sugar. The average adolescent is consuming about fifteen to twenty teaspoons of sugar daily. (Scott, 2) Along with the sugar children are eating more and more fast food. The sit down dinner has come to an end. In most families both parents work fulltime leaving little time to prepare healthy meals. Parents look for food that is quick, cheap and satisfies the child. The problem with fast food is that has very little nutritious value and is often high in fat and salt content, with a good measure of preservative thrown in. Childhood obesity can also be attributable in many cases to a poor diet and lack of activity. The media is causing children to become more sedentary. With the saturation of non physical activities such as video and computer games, children are spending more time in front of the television screen or computer monitor and less time engaged in physical activities. Often while

children are playing these games they are snacking on junk food without burning any calories. It is recommended that children perform at least 60 minutes of some form of moderate to intense physical activity a day. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development studied third graders across the US and discovered that the average child was only receiving 25 minutes of physical activity a week at school. (Children Need more Play!, 1) Childhood obesity has a major effect on the child's overall physical state. Childhood obesity is known to cause Type 2 Diabetes. About 90 percent of people with Type 2 Diabetes are obese. Obesity increases the insulin resistance and glucose intolerance making the drug for Type 2 diabetes less effective. Diabetes can lead to other serious health issues such as damaged blood vessels, kidney failure, blindness and limb amputations. (AOA Fact Sheets (health), 3) Childhood obesity also may cause children to have higher cholesterol levels, sleep and breathing difficulties, heart problems and asthma. (AOA Fact Sheets (health), 3) Not only does childhood obesity cause children to have physical problems, it also hinders their mental well being. Many children who are obese have low self esteem. Embarrassed because they are fat in a society that worships thin bodies but pushes fast food. In a recent study it was discovered that there was a significant relationship between obesity and low self esteem. Obese children have reported being teased about their weight, many times feeling like an outsider shunned from activities with other children. They have also reported being the target of negative comments about their obesity from their peers, strangers and even family members. (AOA Fact Sheets (youth), 3) There is a direct correlation between obese children and obese adults according to

studies done tracking obese children. Eighty percent of children between the ages of 10 to 13 years old who were obese as a child continued to be obese in their adult years. Adult obesity has its own host of medical problems such as carpal tunnel syndrome, gallbladder disease, liver disease, infertility, stroke and many different types of cancer. Furthermore the low self esteem that the obese child experienced during adolescence usually carries over into adulthood. (Links, 1) Children need to eat healthier and become more active in order to live healthier and happier lives. The remedy to obesity in children involves many changes including lifestyle, exercise, and diet. It will take an aggressive effort by the government and medical professionals to educate the public about this silent epidemic. Childhood obesity is a major health problem among our children an epidemic that needs to be immediately addressed and stopped. Dr. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States has said " Except for smoking, obesity is now the number one preventable cause of death in this country." Perhaps all McDonald's Kid's meals should bear the same warnings required on cigarette packages.-" The Surgeon General Has Determined That the Contents of This Box May Be Dangerous to Your Health"! Sources " AOA Fact Sheets: Health Effects of Obesity." American Obesity Association. [http://www.obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/Health\\_Effects/shtml](http://www.obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/Health_Effects/shtml). " AOA Fact Sheets: Obesity in Youth." American Obesity Association. [http://obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/obesity\\_youth.shtml](http://obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/obesity_youth.shtml). " Causes Of Obesity." AC: Obesity and Weight Loss Articles. <http://www.annecollins.com/obesity/causes-of-obesity.htm> " Children Need More Play!" Dr. Greene. Com. [http://www.drgreene.com/21\\_1418.html](http://www.drgreene.com/21_1418.html) " Links Between Children and Adult Obesity."

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