

Childhood obesity prevention

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



Childhood Obesity Prevention Marie King English Composition II ENG122

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Prevention What is Childhood Obesity? The American Academy of Pediatrics

defines it as: " an excess percentage of body weight due to fat that puts people at risk for many health problems. In children older than two years of age, obesity is assessed by a measure called the Body Mass Index (BMI)"

(American Academy of Pediatrics). Childhood obesity is such an important

issue. There currently seems to be an epidemic on the rise and growing

evidence to support this alarming rise in childhood obesity. Childhood

obesity is a society issues as well as a personal issue. Childhood obesity is an

issue that must be a priority for both society and parents. As we address

Childhood obesity, we need to look at preventative measures and strategies

to ensure that we control and recognize the symptoms and indicators

associated with Childhood obesity. As we take a look at the various causes

and symptoms associated with childhood obesity, I will consider the following

question, " What strategies and approaches will help in the prevention and

management of childhood obesity? " There has been an abundance of

research conducted on this topic. Research studies show an alarming rise in

the childhood obesity in children today as compared to a decade ago

(American Academy of Pediatrics, 201 1). Research shows that obese

children suffer both socially and academically. They often times have a poor

self-image and are more prone to depression. Studies also show a higher risk

of contracting other medical issues as a result of obesity. Some studies have

linked obesity to such conditions as high blood pressure, diabetes and

cardiovascular diseases. A targeted search was performed beginning with

such search terms as “ obesity”, “ childhood obesity”, “ obesity prevention” and “ obesity strategies. ” Data was collected from various sources provided through the ProQuest database as well as on the internet. Data will be presented that supports current research in the field of Childhood Obesity. The recent articles published in the Childhood Obesity Journal specifically, volume 8, were extremely useful in helping to understand the various causes, strategies, techniques and ongoing research around childhood obesity. A lot of research on obesity has been mostly focused on youth and young adults. As we begin to focus more of our efforts at childhood obesity we will gain a better understanding and begin to develop longer lasting strategies for prevention. This shift in focus can have a positive impact on reducing the childhood obesity epidemic and raising healthy and happy children. Parents are the first contributing factor to weight problems in their children. If both parents have not been adopting healthy eating habits and regular exercise routines it is hard to instill those characteristics in their child or children. Research has shown that, “ maternal obesity before and during pregnancy disrupts glucose homeostasis, insulin sensitivity, amino acid synthesis and fat metabolism, increasing the risk for subsequent obesity and disease in the offspring. ” (Philip R., et al. 2012). In other words, if the mother is obese and does not get it under control and managed prior to pregnancy it could affect her unborn child. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2004) the obesity rate has more than tripled since 1981. There seems to be a connection between obesity and minorities. Obesity causes more than physical health issues. Childhood obesity can cause mental health issues as well. Some suffer from depression, anxiety,

and self-esteem issues. These can all be a symptom of childhood obesity. In addition, incurred medical expenses acquired to help manage and cure childhood obesity are another issue that arises as a result of childhood obesity. As a society we need to change how we think about childhood obesity. We need to think about childhood in a larger and much broader content. We cannot solely place the blame on the child or the parent it is a society issue. If we can get society to think differently about childhood obesity and get this epidemic center stage for a while then we can get the backing and support necessary to try and get childhood obesity under control and develop strategies to help with the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity. One of the best ways to prevent and help with childhood obesity is education. Early preventative steps will lead to a lower percentage of those affected with childhood obesity. If we ensure that society is aware and understand what childhood obesity is, what are some of the causes and how to prevent it then we can make progressive strides to reduce this epidemic. Schools play an important role with the education and awareness of childhood obesity. If we utilize the school system to train our teachers and educational professionals as well as our student to lead healthy lives and inform them of the dangers of childhood obesity, we are equipping them for success. If we educate our parents prior to having children or during pregnancy about childhood obesity and provide them with adequate resources and prevention strategies we can get ahead of the issue before it becomes a problem. We need more roll models to set an example of the behavior we want to instill in our children to illicit a healthy behavior. If we expect our children to behave in a certain way, we should provide examples

for them of what that behavior should look like. Some children will be motivated to choose healthier options if we provide an example for them to follow. We can identify roll models at school and roll models in the home who exemplify the behavior we want the child to absorb. There are several strategies we can implement to help prevent childhood obesity. The key is to start prevention and awareness early. Develop healthy habits that will carryover throughout childhood into adult life. Childhood obesity prevention starts with pregnancy and continues through childhood. As most toddlers enter preschool at an early age, schools should be prepared to institute healthier snacks and encourage parent to provide only healthy snacks for their children. School should provide a list of what is considered a "healthy snack" so parents have some guidelines to help with their choosing. Schools should also encourage drinking water and staying away from soda and drinks with a high sugar content. Options should include providing easy ways for children to get their required amount of water each day, like water breaks, encouraging parents to send water bottles with their child or installing water faucets in schools. As children progress through school there should be healthier options offered in cafeteria's to encourage healthy eating habits. Another strategy in the prevention of childhood obesity is more daily physical activity. Get our children active and moving. Regular physical activity is an important aspect to helping prevent childhood obesity. Finding creative ways to incorporate physical activity throughout the day will encourage children to become more physically active. Schools and teachers can set specific times during the day for planned physical activities. We need to provide educators with the appropriate training directed at the different

stages of children's schooling. What works for toddlers may need to change or be altered for elementary school students. Teachers must be equipped with the appropriate tools, education and support so they can pass on that knowledge and support to our children. As stated in an article on childhood obesity, " During active class time, physical educators can look to the teachable moments in which they can talk to an entire class concerning individuals differences. " (Green, G., et al, 2012). Doctors and healthcare professionals also play a critical role in the prevention of childhood obesity. Parents should ensure that a doctor on a regular basis sees their children. Doctors can monitor a child's weight, provide preventative options to parents and partner with parents in addressing and preventing childhood obesity. Doctors can detect early signs that a child could be a risk for childhood obesity and take immediate action to develop a plan or regime for the child in conjunction with the parents to follow to ensure that their child does not become part of the epidemic. Doctors can suggest such things as counseling, exercise plan, portion control, and healthier eating habits to help prevent childhood obesity. Some strategies for schools to use in the prevention of childhood obesity are: * Vending machines that provide healthier food and snack options * Structured regular physical activities * Competitive sports or other activities * Healthier drink choices * Health education awareness or courses * On-site counseling or counselors Some strategies for parents to use in the prevention of childhood obesity are: * Monitor and regulate TV and complete time * Encourage healthy eating habits by purchasing more fruits and vegetables and less cookies and chips. * Shop for foods that are lower in sugars and fat content * Have family dinners earlier in the evening and

discourage unhealthy late night snacking * Encourage walking or daily exercise as a family * Lead by example — parents who engage in healthy eating habits are setting the example for their children. A study in 2009 revealed that, “ 33% of 5th through 7th grade students reported watching more than 3 hours of television person (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011). If we can get ahead of this epidemic, the better chances we have for lowering the number of children affected by childhood obesity. When we change the way society views and responds to this epidemic we can develop strategies to help prevent childhood obesity. As we raise awareness of childhood obesity we bring it to the forefront and are better equipped to prevent it before it happens or at least get it under control. Physical education, health education, teachers, doctors and parents all play a critical role in the prevention of childhood obesity. References American Academy of Pediatrics (201 1). Pediatrics, 128 571-577 American Academy of Pediatrics. About Childhood Obesity. Retrieved from www2.aap.org/obesity/about de Silva-Sanigorski, A., M., Bell, A. C., Kremer, P., Park, J., Demajo, L., Smith, M., . . . Swinburn, B. (2012). Process and impact evaluation of the romp & chomp obesity prevention intervention in early childhood settings: Lessons learned from implementation in preschools and long day care settings. *Childhood Obesity*, 8(3), 205-215. doi: 10. 1089/chi. 2011. 0118 Green, G., Riley, C., & Hargrove, B. (2012). Physical activity and childhood obesity: Strategies and solutions for schools and parents. *Education*, 132(4), 915-920. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1022298763?accountid=32521> Hendriks, A., Gubbels, J. S., De Vries, N. K., Seidell, J. C., Kremers, S. P. J. & Jansen, M. W. (2012). Interventions to Promote an

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