

National Childhood Obesity Awareness

About 1 in 5 (19%) children in the United States is Obese. Obesity is when a person carries excess weight or body fat that might affect his or her health. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has deemed September National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in hopes of providing a chance us to learn about the seriousness of this health condition.

Associated Health Issues

Children with obesity have a higher chance of developing chronic health conditions and diseases compared to their normal weight peers. Some of these conditions include:

- Asthma
- Sleep Apnea
- Bone and Joint Problems
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Hypertension
- High cholesterol

Children with obesity are also more likely to be bullied and teased compared to their peers and can suffer from social isolation, depression and lower self-esteem.

They are also more likely to have obesity as adults.

Causes of Obesity

Many factors can impact a child's risk of becoming obese and can include:

- Being Inactive
- Lack of sleep
- Metabolism
- Genetics
- Home Environment
- Easy access to inexpensive, high calorie foods/beverages
- Lack of access to affordable, healthier foods
- Lack of community resources to get physical activity

How Can We Help Prevent Obesity and Support Healthy Growth in Children?

There is no simple solution to combating childhood obesity, however there are ways we as a community can support our children/students to attain good health.

Provide Healthy Food and Drinks

- Avoid high fat snacks such as chips, cookies and candy. Instead offer fruits or veggies (pear, apple, banana, carrots).
- Try fat free or low fat milk and avoid sugary drinks like soda, energy drinks and juices.

Visit the USDA's What's Cooking Website for a Variety of Healthy, Ethnically Diverse Recipes:

<https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>

Control Our Food Portions

Visit the USDA's Website Choose My Plate to help you create and maintain your healthy eating style:

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Get Moving

- Regular physical activity helps us stay healthy and develop strong muscles/bones.
- We should be physically active for at least 60 minutes a day (consult with your physician or APRN nurse practitioner if you have any health issues)

Limit Screen Time

Children should have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time a day. Screen time includes watching television, DVDs or movies as well as using devices like smartphones, tablets, computers or video game consoles.

Get Enough Sleep

School Aged Children 6-13 years should be getting 9-11 hours of sleep per night.

Teenagers 14-17 years should be getting 8-10 hours of sleep per night.

For More Information

Talk to your child's health care provider (physician or APRN nurse practitioner) at their next annual health maintenance visit.

Visit the Following Sites:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/features/childhoodobesity/index.html>
- <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/take-charge-health-guide-teenagers?dkrd=lglgc1334>