Childhood Obesity

What is obesity?
Obesity is the excessive storage of fatty tissues in the body. It is characterized by a body mass index (BMI) in the 95th percentile or higher for that particular person’s weight. Obesity is a growing problem in today’s society. It is reported that more than 33% of children under the age of 19 are overweight or are at risk of becoming overweight. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 30 years.

What affects children’s weight?
- Genetics
- Psychological
- Metabolical
- Diet
- Exercise

What causes childhood obesity?
One of the main causes of obesity in children is an unhealthy diet. Many children eat too many fatty and fried foods. Nutrition is extremely important in young children who are growing and developing strong bodies. Another cause of childhood obesity is lack of exercise or physical activity of any kind. Genetics can also play a role in a child’s weight gain. In many cases, if a parent struggles with weight issues, their children will also. A family with a history of obesity or related diseases should be checked regularly.

Are there solutions to childhood obesity?
Yes, there are simple solutions to ending obesity in children and adults:
- Adjusting children’s diets to include more nutritious foods (such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and limiting the fats, sugars and carbohydrates) is one way to lose weight.
- Encouraging children to engage in more physical activities whether it be a sport or riding a bike, can help get a child in better physical shape, therefore putting an end to childhood obesity.

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• Family teamwork is key to weight loss. Encouragement is important to keep the family motivated.

Do parents have an effect on the weight of their children?

Yes, parental influence is a major factor in the health of children. Children tend to mirror the habits of their parents. Contrary to what some may think, a parents diet and exercise habits weigh heavily on that of their children. Kids follow by example. Parents, who dismiss the idea of a healthy diet, rarely feed their children nutritious meals. It is extremely important for parents enforce healthy living habits in children at a young age. Parental weight loss is one of the greatest predictors of weight loss in children.

References


