

CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Children that are considered obese in preschool are five times more likely to be overweight or obese as an adult. Childhood obesity can lead to an early onset of heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer. Obese children are commonly a victim of bullying, causing them to have low self-esteem and/or depression.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

You may be wondering, how do you know if your child is obese or at risk of being obese? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), childhood obesity is defined as having a body mass index at or above the 95th percentile for children and teens of the same age and gender. A health professional can recommend lifestyle changes early on to reverse the health complications that occur with childhood obesity.



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY

In most cases childhood obesity is caused by modifiable lifestyle factors, such as lack of exercise and making poor food choices. In rare cases, obesity can be caused by genetics or hormone imbalances. Since childhood obesity is on the rise, there have been many programs and initiatives put in place to turn the trend in a healthier direction.

Regular exercise and physical activity is key in maintaining a healthy weight, it is recommended for children to get at least an hour a day of exercise. Local parks may have trails or exercise equipment placed with signs on how to use it. After care, day care, and summer camps are great ways to get your kids playing with other children. Playing tag, hide and seek, kick ball, dancing, stretching, and hula hoop are other options for endless healthy fun.

DONT FORGET ABOUT NUTRITION

Nutrition is also very important, and activity cannot outweigh a poor diet. Staying hydrated with water throughout the day provides a feeling of fullness and helps prevent overeating. Providing options for fruits and vegetables is also helpful. For example, would you like broccoli or carrots with dinner? Children thrive with a routine so it's best to eat around the same times each day. Have healthy snack options such as apple slices with peanut butter or fruit with low-fat cheese in between meals. Eating together at the table free of distractions such as television, computers, and smart phones also helps the child learn how to mindfully eat. As an adult, they will know when they are full and stop eating.



It is a priority for our children to live long and healthy lives. Being a role model and letting them choose their activities and healthy food choices will set them up for a healthy life.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For support from a registered nurse or registered dietitian or to ask questions, please call a Blues On CallSM health coach at **1-888-BLUE-428**.

Log in to the member website listed on the back of your member ID card.

- Click on the **Wellness** tab.
- Click on **Additional Resources** on the left.
- Click on **Health Topics** under **WebMD health information** to search health topics or use the medical encyclopedia to review health issues you want to know more about.