

Childhood Obesity

What does childhood obesity mean?

Obesity is used to describe a health condition in which your body weight is higher than the value that is considered normal and healthy for your height. If you have obesity, the weight of your body tends to be higher compared to other children of the same age and gender as you.¹

Causes of childhood obesity

Several factors contribute to obesity:

1. Eating habits involving a liking for sugary foods, foods high in fats, salts, and low in important nutrients.^{1,2} Such foods include: Fried chicken, hamburgers, sandwiches, chips, ice cream, and pizza.



Figure 1: Some of the foods that contribute to obesity

2. Psychological concerns such as:

- Stress
- Boredom
- Depression

3. Physical exercise does not meet the minimum standard. If you are less active, weight tends to increase since the food consumed will not be adequately used by your body.

Risk factors for childhood obesity

The risk factors that contribute to obesity include:

- **Genetics:** Obesity may run through a family, and if one or both of your parents, siblings or relatives have obesity, you are most likely to suffer from the condition.²
- **Lifestyle:** It includes how you eat and exercise. Increased physical exercise and healthy eating habits such as avoiding hamburgers will reduce the risk for obesity.
- **Sleep problems:** Having too much sleep or little sleep will affect your appetite. You may tend to eat foods that have components which contribute to obesity.

Management of obesity

1. Healthy eating habits.³ You should try foods such as:

- Vegetables and fresh fruits
- Lean protein foods (fish and chicken)
- Reduced fat-products including low-fat yogurt, cheese, and skim milk
- Whole grains such as wheat and rice



Figure 2: Healthy foods

2. Lifestyle changes: Increase your level of physical exercise.⁴ Some of the helpful workouts would include jogging around your house or playing hopscotch. You need to limit on computer games and watching television.

3. It is also important to visit your doctor regularly for check-up and monitoring of how the condition is progressing.

Other important steps you can consider to help with managing your condition include:

- Not skipping meals: If possible stick to the meal plan provided to you.
- Develop a self-reward system: When you achieve any of the positive behaviors, such as exercising, you may want to give yourself a treat to motivate yourself. This could be a simple thing such as taking a hot shower on that day.
- Seek social support: You can enroll to some of the beneficial programs where you can get support in form of diet and advice concerning your condition.

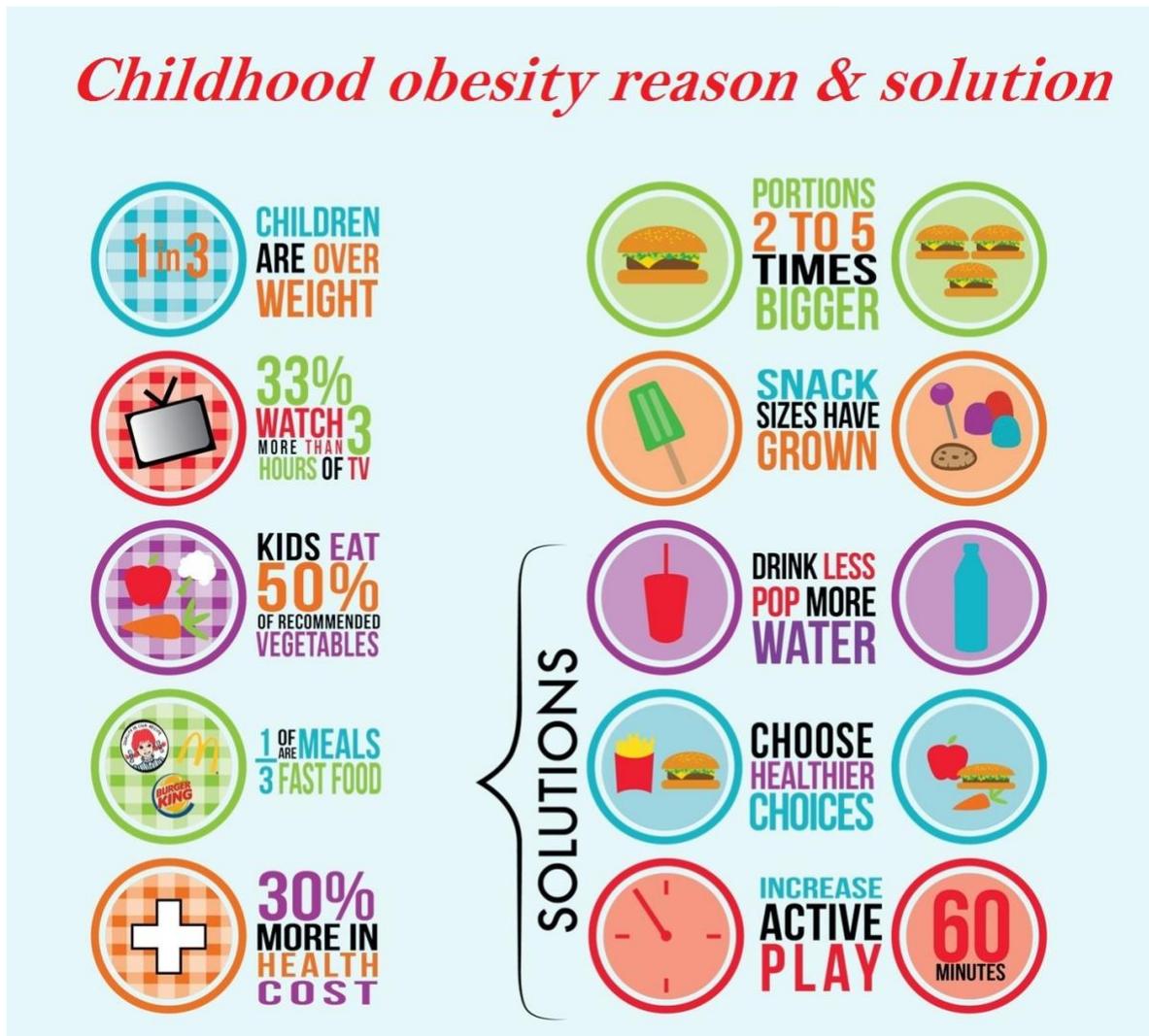


Figure 3: Some of the solutions to obesity

Annotated Bibliography

1. Carson, Scott Alan. "The Cliometrics of BMI and Obesity." *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2011, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199736362.013.0004.

In this article, the authors provide a look back at key studies concerning the body mass index (BMI) and obesity among children. The various ways in which BMI derivatives are used to make inferences are outlined. A historical perspective of how BMIs have been changing over the years is highlighted, offering important insights on the health status of children then and at present.

The article also covers aspects of BMI derivatives including the trends in BMI-for-age, weight, and stature among adolescents and children over the past few years. A highlight of how these trends have been changing provides a foundation for the prediction of both the current and future trends in childhood obesity.

2. Lazorick, Suzanne. "Obesity Risk Factors in Children and Adolescents." *Encyclopedia of Lifestyle Medicine & Health*, 2017, doi:10.4135/9781412994149.n251.

A review of the risk factors for obesity during childhood is provided by Lazorick and Suzanne. The most important factors examined in the article include lifestyle habits, genetic factors, age, and sleep problems. Other health factors such as diabetes and heart problems, and their association with childhood and adolescent obesity is also examined. The authors emphasize that lifestyle habits contribute a great deal to cases of obesity.

3. Hubbard, Betsy. "Meal Replacement-Based Weight-Loss Programs." *Obesity Management*, vol. 3, no. 6, 2015, pp. 292–295., doi:10.1089/obe.2007.0122.

The effects of changing the meal plans for obese children is supported by a study conducted by a research team in the United States. The article sites study based evidence that children administered with healthy diets, including meals low in fat and calories, and high in protein helped with weight loss among obese and overweight children candidates.

4. Jerry S., and Michael P. "Treatment, Prevention, and Management of Childhood Obesity." *Childhood Obesity*, 2016, pp. 319–331., doi:10.1201/9781315370958-30.

The authors focus is on the ways of managing and preventing obesity in children. Possible treatments for the condition are also highlighted. Lifestyle adjustment and proper diet are emphasized as the most effective ways of dealing with obesity in children. Regular visits to the healthcare providers and primary care physicians for check-up and monitoring of one's condition is also presented as part of the management measures.