

The Fight Against Overweight and Obesity Among Adolescents

Being overweight or obese means that you have too much body fat from taking in more energy than your body needs.¹

Overweight: A Body Mass Index between the 85th and 95th percentile based on age and gender.^{2,3}

Obesity: A Body Mass Index that is at the 95th percentile or higher based on age and gender.^{2,3,4}

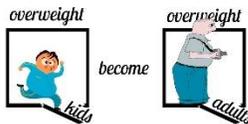
Risk Factors:

- Poor diet⁵
- Poor nutrition education⁵
- Not enough physical activity^{1,5}
- Lazy lifestyle⁵
 - Too much time spent watching TV or playing video games.¹
- Genetics⁵
 - Obesity in family members¹
- Socioeconomic status¹
 - Family income, parent's education, parent's jobs
- Race/ethnicity⁴



The Facts:

- About 20.6% of children 12-19 years old are obese, which is 4 times higher than it was 30 years ago.^{3,4}



- You may be more likely to become obese as an adult if you are obese as a teenager.³
- Obesity in youth can lead to many health problems both while young and later in life such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cancer, asthma, and bone/joint issues.^{1,3,5}

- Obesity early in life may lead to depression, low self-confidence, and low quality of life.³

What Can You Do?

- Decrease the calories you eat⁵
- Eat a balanced diet with many different foods that are high in nutrients.⁵
 - Eat more seasonal fruits and vegetables, and grains.⁵
 - Limit sugary drinks, fast food, and junk food.^{1,5,6}
 - Choose healthy fats such as olive oil over saturated fats such as margarine.⁵
- Decrease portion sizes⁵
- Eat at home more⁵
- Eat more meals as a family³
- Get 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.⁶
- Keep screen time (TV, computers, phones, iPads, tablets) under 2 hours each day.⁶



Additional Resources:

- MyPlate website: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>.
- 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines: https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf.
- 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines: Physical Activity Guidelines: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-1/>.
- SNAP website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>.
- SNAP-Ed website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-education-snap-ed>.

References:

1. Mistry SK, Puthussery S. Risk factors of overweight and obesity in childhood and adolescence in South Asian countries: a systematic review of the evidence. *Public Health*. 2015;129(3): 200-209. doi: 10.1016/j.puhe.2014.12.004.

This study was a review article looking at risk factors for overweight/obesity among adolescents in South Asia. The risk factors that were significantly associated with overweight and obesity were little physical activity, too much screen time, unhealthy diet, and socioeconomic status. This systematic review shows that overweight/obesity is multi-factorial. The article may be useful because it can help you understand your risk for becoming overweight or obese and help you identify modifiable risk factors so that you can make behavior changes to both prevent or control overweight or obesity. I included this article in my educational handout to inform the audience of the risk factors for overweight/obesity among adolescents.

2. Childhood Obesity Facts: Overview. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/obesity/facts.htm>. Updated January 29, 2018. Accessed November 28, 2018.

3. Golden NH, Schneider M, Wood C. Preventing Obesity and Eating Disorders in Adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2016;138(3):e1-e10. doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-1649.

This article discusses both obesity and eating disorders among adolescents, the relationship between the two, and ways to prevent them. Both eating disorders and obesity, two conditions of opposite extremes, are very dangerous and very common among adolescents. This article is useful because it identifies healthy ways to prevent and treat obesity so that adolescents do not develop an eating disorder. I used this article because it provided statistics and facts on adolescent obesity, as well as easy behavior changes that may help prevent or manage obesity in a healthy way such as eating meals with your family, which I thought would both be helpful for the audience.

4. Childhood Obesity Facts: Prevalence of Childhood Obesity in the United States. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>. Updated August 13, 2018. Accessed November 28, 2018.

5. Marques M, Molerés A, Rendo-Urteago T et al. Design of the nutritional therapy for overweight and obese Spanish adolescents conducted by registered dietitians; the EVASYON study. *Nutr Hosp*. 2012;27(1): 165-176. doi: 10.3305/nh.2012.27.1.5452.

This article identifies the goals of dietary interventions in the treatment of obesity. The aim of the study was to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions for overweight and obese adolescents, specifically Hispanics. The program included meal plans and an educational component by registered dietitians. This study is useful because it identifies what may be effective intervention strategies for obesity and areas where improvement may be necessary. I included this source in my handout because it talked about several risk factors associated with overweight/obesity during adolescence, as well as provided suggestions for what to eat more of and less of when trying to control obesity, which I felt would be both useful and informative for the audience.

6. Sampasa-Kanyinga H, Chaput JP. Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and energy drinks and adherence to physical activity and screen time recommendations among adolescents. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*. 2017;29(5):274-288. doi: 10.1515/ijamh-2015-0098.

This article discusses some healthy lifestyle behaviors for adolescents including recommendations for engaging in regular physical activity and limiting screen time. But, the purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the consumption of sugar-sweetened-beverages and/or energy drinks affected adolescent's adherence to these recommendations for physical activity and screen time. I think that this study is useful because it shows how the physical activity and diet, two major predictors of obesity, influence one another and lifestyle behaviors of adolescents. This study it may be helpful in identifying appropriate interventions to combat the obesity issue. I used this source to provide recommendations for behavior modifications (diet and exercise) that could be easily implemented by individuals to improve their condition and overall health.

7. Pictures courtesy of Pixabay: <https://pixabay.com/>.