

Obesity in children

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Abstract

We all want our kids to be healthy, but when we shower too much of love by buying all kinds of foods that the kids like, it causes obesity at a very young age. It is a well known fact that obesity in children as well as adolescents is a very severe health burden. Obesity needs to be treated as early as possible in children because when the treatment is delayed, it can lead to not only early morbidity, but also early mortality. It is a challenge to first identify the children who are obese and then try to change their lifestyle.

Many estimates say that there are more than 22 million children below the age of 5, who are obese. It is also known that every child in 10 is overweight.

Our children are getting fatter with every passing year. Around 2 percent of urban Indian kids are obese, 8-10 percent of them are overweight, and the number of children being a victim of obesity is growing. One thing we can say is that –“Child Obesity in India on the Rise”

Keyword: Unhealthy eating patterns.

Definition

Children with BMI equal to or exceeding the age-gender-specific 95th Percentile are defined obese. Those with BMI equal to exceeding the 85th but are below 95th percentiles are defined overweight and are at risk for obesity related co-morbidities. Prevalence of Childhood Overweight/Obesity:

India/Delhi 2004 -16

India/Delhi 2006 -29

Causes:



Fig. 1

1. unhealthy eating patterns
2. Genetic factors: A child with an obese parent is more likely to be obese as obesity tends to run in the family.
3. lack of physical activity
4. Family eating habits.
5. Spending a lot of time on sedentary pursuits
6. Socio-economic status

Consequences of Obesity

1. High cholesterol
2. High blood pressure

3. Early heart disease
4. Diabetes Mellitus
5. Bone problems
6. Skin conditions such as heat rash, fungal infections, and acne
7. Eating disorders
8. Liver problems, including fatty liver
9. Sleep apnea
10. Asthma
11. Polycystic Ovarian disease
12. Depression

Prevention

1. Serving more fruits and vegetables
2. Buy fewer soft drinks and high-fat, high-calorie snack foods
3. Making sure your child eats breakfast every day
4. Eat fast food less often
5. Do Not use food as a reward
6. Physical activity is also very important. Kids need about 60 minutes of play each day.

Treatment: Since the incidence of overweight children are increasing, it is important to create awareness among parents about the causes and consequences of obesity.

1. Palatable high calorie foods are avoided
2. A Traffic light diet approach is used –
Green foods-Go (recommended)
Yellow foods-Caution (restricted quantity)
Red foods-Stop (avoid)
1. Regular exercise
2. Behavior modification
3. Refined sugars, fast-food, soft drinks and frequent eating –out should be avoided
4. Changing lifestyles
5. Recommended Physical activity for children:
30 minutes of moderate activity daily

20 minutes of vigorous activity 3 days a week

Less than 2 hours/day of TV viewing/computer usage

1. Help child combat with low self-esteem, often associated with obesity.

Conclusion

Obesity in adolescents and children has raised to significant levels globally with serious public health consequences. In addition to cardiovascular, emotional and social issues, it poses a serious hazard to the basic.

References

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