

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

I. Starts with the parents

*1 in 4 adults in the U.S. are obese. Obesity responsible for an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 deaths annually. Second leading cause of preventable deaths after tobacco soon to be #1.

II. Children

*In early childhood less than 6 years old the obesity status of the parents is the best predictor of the child's obesity risk in the future. Having two obese parents increases a child's risk of obesity by 15 times compared to a child with non-obese parents. At age 6 or older the child's own obesity status becomes the stronger predictor of future risk.

* Currently in the U.S. 14% of kids/teens are "overweight" per CDC or obese and 20% are at the CDC "at risk for overweight" or overweight.

III. Body Mass Index (BMI)

Formula

IV. Why

Genetics – rare, but always hoped for

Environment – eating vs. activity

Dietary trends –

Easy availability of food

High calorie content of fast foods

Increased consumption of highly processed foods esp. sugary beverages – Caribou, who cooks anymore?? Definition of cooking

Decreased consumption of fiber and low density foods

Strong marketing of fast foods and snacks to kids – Happy Meal

Sedentary Lifestyle

Decrease in structured physical activity – no more Phy.ed

Automation – time saving, saves calories too. Lean mean fingers

Jabba the Hut evolution with voice activated computers and Refrigerators and bathrooms by remote.

The fear factor – middle school kids home alone, dual employed parents, electronic babysitters

Increased "virtual" world experiences through television, computers, video games

V. Complications – Obese children are developing these issues younger with more advanced outcomes for age. Remember these are the people that will be taking care of our generation, don't we want them able bodied?

Obesity associated with more than 40 comorbidities, mainly in 5 categories:

Metabolic –primarily "metabolic syndrome" insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia. Increased incidence of high chol >170 in kids

leading to strokes, MI much younger. Estimated 25% of obese kids have insulin resistance.

Anatomic – Obstructive sleep apnea (breathing issues) the most acutely dangerous medical complication, can cause hypoxia, heart strain. and GI reflux

Psychological –depression from low self esteem

Degenerative – arthritis (all that extra wt on immature joints)

Neoplastic – cancer of reproductive organs, GI track etc.

VI. Solutions – national problem that needs immediate attention, treating obesity related complications may exceed age related medical needs of our population.

Parents – If you only do 2 things get rid of– TV and pop, or sugared drinks

#1 while toddlers (but never too late just more difficult) get control of the television! No TVs in bedrooms. Limit combined TV, computer and video games to 2 hours/day maximum.

Avoid using food as reward or punishment – no clean plate club

Set regular meal times and as much as possible eat together

Decrease both caloric density and glycemic index of foods served

i.e. serve foods with high H₂O and low sugar content

Model physical activity esp during family leisure time – walk

Support a positive body image by emphasizing fitness and health not weight or appearance.

Chemical and surgical obesity treatments option for adults with severe obesity and medical complications

Community Advocacy –

Advocate your school district reinstate or increase physical education classes at all grade levels

Encourage support and use of recreational facilities – low cost, accessible to families

Community based after school programs providing play and recreational physical activities esp. middle school and up

Hold your school accountable for providing a healthy nutritional environment even if it creates short term cost increases by lobbying for soft drink and candy vending machines to be eliminated

Boycott school lunch high fat alternatives i.e burger baskets, pizza as daily choices.

Lobby and support urban planning that creates safe and encouraging environments for walking and biking

Employer support of “creative” physical activities such as walkabouts, stationary under desk bikes etc. limit group garbage. Obese employees like children are at risk and better activity and eating has a positive affect on attendance and health premiums.