

What Does It Mean?



Consequences of Childhood Obesity

Obese and overweight children are at risk for a number of serious health problems such as:

- **Diabetes:** Type 2 diabetes was once called adult-onset diabetes. Now with the rise in childhood obesity, there is a dramatic rise in the number of children suffering from type 2 diabetes. Untreated, this can be a life-threatening condition.
- **Asthma:** Extra weight can make it harder to breathe and can inflame the respiratory tract. There is a rise in childhood asthma and children with serious asthma are more likely to be overweight.
- **Heart Failure:** Being overweight makes the heart work harder. Overweight children are more likely to grow up to be overweight adults who develop heart problems.

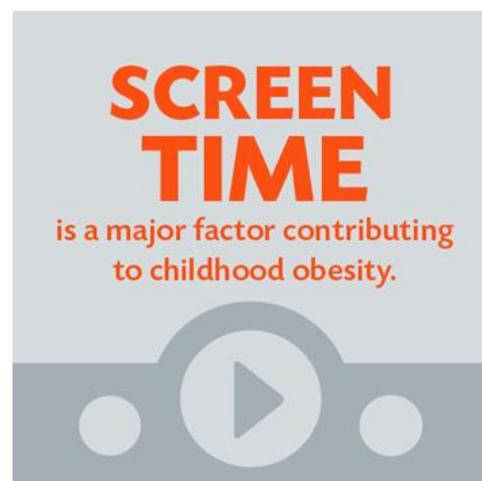
[Create a Healthier Lifestyle for Your Family](#)

Why Childhood Obesity Now?

There is no single reason for the rise in childhood overweight, but there are a number of contributing factors:

Television and Media

Screen time is a major factor contributing to childhood obesity. It takes away from the time children spend being physically active, leads to increased snacking in front of the TV, and influences children with advertisements for unhealthy foods.



Marketing of Unhealthy Foods

Nearly half of U.S. middle and high schools allow advertising of less healthy foods, which impacts students' ability to make healthy food choices. Also, foods high in calories, sugars, salt, and fat, and low in nutrients are advertised and marketed extensively toward children and adolescents, while advertising for healthier foods is almost nonexistent in comparison.

Limited Access to Healthy Affordable Foods

Some people have less access to stores and supermarkets that sell healthy, affordable food such as fruits and vegetables, especially in rural, low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Supermarket access is associated with a reduced risk for obesity. Choosing healthy foods is difficult for parents who live in areas with an overabundance of unhealthy options like convenience stores and fast food restaurants.

Lack of Daily Physical Activity

Most adolescents fall short of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendation of at least 60 minutes of aerobic physical activity each day. Only 18% of students in grades 9—12 met this recommendation in 2007. Daily, quality physical education in school can help students meet the guidelines; however, in 2009 only 33% had access to and attended daily physical education classes.

[Increase Physical Activity at School](#)

There is no federal
law requiring
**PHYSICAL
EDUCATION**
in American schools

Increased Portion Sizes

Portion sizes of less healthy foods and beverages have increased over time in restaurants, grocery stores, and vending machines. Research shows that children eat more without realizing it if they are served larger portions. This means they are consuming a lot of extra calories, especially when eating high-calorie foods.

Higher Consumption of Sugary Beverages

Sugar drinks are the largest source of added sugar in the diets of children and adolescents. Increasing consumption of these high caloric beverages that offer little or no nutrients is associated with the increasing rates of childhood obesity.

[Learn More About the State of Childhood Obesity](#)

**A FIFTH
OF TEENS**

drink the equivalent of
an extra meal in sugar-
sweetened beverages



Start making a difference today
and show your support of the
fight against childhood obesity.