

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

Every year, the month of September is observed as 'National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month' to spread awareness about the growing prevalence of obesity in children and the ways through which this global health issue can be tackled.

In the U.S. alone, one in five children, around 18.5% of the child population has obesity. Such children are more likely to develop health issues such as diabetes, kidney issues, osteoarthritis, and fatty liver disease later in life. Therefore, it is extremely important for parents, educators, guardians, and the community at large to come together to guide future generations towards a healthier lifestyle.



To help them to play their part in preventing obesity, here are some tips:

Ways to Prevent Childhood Obesity

1. While many believe that restricting calorie intake is the best way to lose weight and ultimately beat obesity, the same strategy might not be recommended for growing children. They need adequate calcium, vitamins, and minerals for the development of their bodily systems. Before making any drastic changes to their diet and lifestyle (unless it's unhealthy), consult a pediatrician.
2. Make sure that you give your children the right amount of greens, whole grains, dairy products, and lean meats. Avoid processed foods and sugary drinks at all costs. If your child loves those packed juices and snacks, replace them with healthier made-at-home alternatives instead. Of course, consuming them once in a while is fine, but don't forget to teach them about the importance of portion control.
3. Don't let them spend more than two hours in front of a screen every day. Not only does this adversely affect their eyes, but increased screen time has been linked to obesity and other serious health issues.
4. Practice what you preach. Eat healthy, get rid of junk food, and exercise for an hour every day. Your child will definitely pick up these healthy living habits from you.
5. Don't make exercise time boring! If they don't like jumping ropes or cycling, dance with them, play a game of tennis, or encourage them to go swimming. Monotony is not a child's best friend.
6. There is enough research to prove that lack of sleep can result in weight gain. Make sure that everyone in the household gets 8 hours of sleep each night, including your children.

Along with this, motivate your child to build lasting healthy lifestyle habits. Introduce them to meal planning, how to shop for nutritious foods, and make them aware of the risks of a sedentary lifestyle. These simple interventions will not only help them to maintain an ideal weight, but these will also positively impact and determine their mental and physical well-being in the long run. They also might need a routine **ECG resting** check-up to make sure there isn't an underlying health issue.

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