



childhood obesity

Extra weight can impact a child's health and well-being. There are steps that families can take to make healthy changes

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

What is obesity?

Obesity is a medical condition. The term 'obesity' means having an unhealthy amount of extra body fat.

How does the provider know my child is obese?

You can't tell if a child is obese by looking. Your child's provider can tell you if your child is obese by calculating their body mass index (BMI) using their height, weight and age. These numbers are put on a BMI chart to track their growth and identify their weight status. Children who are obese are too high on the chart for what is healthy for a child their age and gender.

What are the causes of obesity?

There are many different reasons why a child may become obese. A child's lifestyle, habits and environment play a part in his or her weight. In most cases, obesity is caused by not being active enough and eating more than the body needs.

What does obesity mean for my child's health?

Obese children are at a higher risk for serious health problems. They are more likely to develop conditions such as:

- High Blood Pressure – High blood pressure means the measured blood pressure is above normal for your child's height, age and gender.
- High Cholesterol – High cholesterol means there is too much fat in the blood. Your provider finds out if your child has high cholesterol through a blood test.
- Diabetes – Diabetes means the sugar in the blood is too high. The body needs sugar for energy but too much sugar in the blood can harm your body.

- Sleep Apnea – Sleep apnea means to stop breathing while sleeping. This can last for 10 to 20 seconds and can happen many times in an hour. During this time, air cannot get into the lungs.
- Obese children are also more likely to be depressed, bullied and teased.

What can I do for my child?

Encourage your child to eat a healthy diet, be physically active and avoid screen time. Be a good role model for your child and get friends and family involved.

Here are ways you can help your child become healthier by remember 5 – 2 – 1 – 0:

- 5 – Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- 2 – No more than 2 hours of TV, computer and video games each day
- 1 – Be physically active for at least 1 hour each day
- 0 – Zero sweetened drinks

Contact Us

We hope you want to learn more about the Healthy Weight Clinic and the Healthy Weight Program. Please visit our Web site at www.chop.edu/healthyweight, or call us at 267-426-2782 (internally at ext. 6-2782). You can also e-mail us at healthyweightprogram@email.chop.edu.

