



FIGHT OBESITY IN KIDS

Obesity in childhood strongly predisposes to obesity in adulthood. Yet many parents are oblivious to the fact that their child is carrying around more than just “puppy fat,” and they assume he or she will simply grow out of it.

However, the facts on this are sobering. According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, children who are already obese between the ages of 6 and 9 are 19 times more likely to be obese when they grow up. And if they are still obese at 10–13 years, they are 44 times more likely to develop into corpulent adults!

why obesity in kids is serious

Everyone knows that fat kids can experience social and psychological problems. But few people realize that many such children already have several risk factors for heart disease (think high cholesterol and high blood pressure) and are heading for an early grave.

One U.S. study of more than 100,000 women discovered that those who were overweight or obese at the age of 18 were 66 percent more likely to die from heart disease, cancer, suicide, and other causes by the age of 30 than women of normal weight. If the women were too fat during adolescence, their risk of dying by middle age was also increased three times.

Researchers now believe that the presence of excess body fat in adolescence may have specific and lasting effects on the metabolic or cardiovascular systems that contribute to premature death.

five ways you can help

- ▶ Breast-feed your child as long as possible. Breast-feeding helps prevent excessive weight gain and obesity in later life.
- ▶ Be a good role model and embrace a healthy lifestyle yourself—eat well and exercise more.
- ▶ Create rules to restrict TV viewing, computer time, soft drinks, and fast food—all of which are linked with rapid weight gain.
- ▶ Prepare family meals regularly to influence your child’s taste preferences towards fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods.
- ▶ If your child seems even a little chubby, have him or her professionally assessed by your doctor or dietitian, and begin immediately to change your family’s lifestyle habits.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.