

Children's Health Update Our Children are Getting Fat!

A brand new study looked at the changes in the number of overweight and obese American children. The findings are chilling. As of 1998 as many as 22% of children ages 4 to 12 were defined as overweight (many define this group as obese). This is in contrast to the same survey done in 1986, which found that only 8% of children were overweight. That's an increase of more than 100%! To put this in perspective, prior studies had shown that it used to take 30 years for the overweight population to double.

Even more telling is the change in all overweight and "obese" children combined. This group grew from 20% in 1986 to up to 38% in 1998! This means that better than one in three American children are overweight or obese. These trends have serious public health implications. We know that excess body weight is a major risk for diabetes and heart disease and other cardiovascular complications. We are raising a very unhealthy generation that is destined to suffer with poor quality of life and a potentially shortened life span while putting a huge drain on our healthcare system. This has to be a call for action!

Among the reasons given for the increase: Children are spending more time watching TV, using computers and playing video games and busy parents are relying more on fast food to feed their families. I know that change can be traumatic, but I believe a little trauma is worth it for those of us that care about raising a healthy child.

Start with small changes at first. Encourage your kids to run and play. Take your child off juice and change to water. Reduce their fast food visits by half. Take fatty and sugary snack foods out of the house. These small changes in diet will make a tremendous difference in their health, IQ and growth.

For those of you who can do better: Remove all refined flour products (cookies, crackers, pretzels, breads, etc.) and replace them with whole grain substitutes or none at all. Make the focus of their diet protein along with lots of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Resolve for this new year to help your children become healthy adults. As their parent, you still have control over their diet for a few more years. Take this opportunity to guide your child in the right direction and know that you did your best to teach them how to care for themselves when they leave the nest.

Yours in health,

Dr. Rick

Dr. Rick Schlüssel is a Chiropractor and Applied Kinesiologist providing preventive health care, treatment for pain and injuries, holistic health assessments and a variety of natural therapies. He can be reached at The Healing Place at 530-889-0388 or by email at rick@mydrnick.com