

The Effects of Obesity

Obesity is a growing health threat in our country, though there are some steps you can take to avoid it.



The National Health, Lung and Blood Institute recommends following a healthy eating plan and making healthy food choices while also keeping tabs on how many calories you consume. Another major factor: portion size. Watch the portion sizes in fast food and other restaurant meals. The portions served

often are enough for two or three people.

Children's portion sizes should be smaller than those for adults.

Another recurring theme: Be active. Make personal and family time active. Find activities that everyone will enjoy. For example, go for a brisk walk, bike or rollerblade, or train together for a walk or run. Reduce screen time. Limit the use of TVs, computers, DVDs and video games because they limit time for physical activity. Health experts recommend two hours or less a day of screen time that's not work- or homework-related.

BY THE NUMBERS

Data from 2009-2010 provided by The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition indicates that over 78 million U.S. adults and about 12.5 million (16.9 percent) children and adolescents are

obese. Recent reports project that by 2030, half of all adults (115 million adults) in the United States will be obese. Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

For children with disabilities, obesity rates are approximately 38 percent higher than for children without disabilities. It gets worse for the adult population. Obesity rates for adults with disabilities are approximately 57 percent higher than for adults without disabilities.

Statistics show obesity has skyrocketed since the 1970s, with the number of states with obese adults and children typically doubling or tripling over the past 40 years.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Nearly 45 percent of children living in poverty are overweight or obese

compared with 22 percent of children living in households with incomes four times the poverty level.

Almost 40 percent of black and Latino youth ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese compared with only 29 percent of white youth.

Obesity among children in the United States has remained flat — at around 17 percent — in 2003-2004 and 2011-2012.

Between 2003 and 2012, obesity among children between 2 and 5 years of age has declined from 14 percent to 8 percent — a 43 percent decrease in just under a decade.

Obesity rates in children 6 to 11 years old have decreased from 18.8 percent in 2003-2004 to 17.7 percent in 2011-2012; obesity rates for children 12 to 19 years old have increased from 17.4 percent to 20.5 percent in the same time period.