

English 101

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The Causes, Effects, and Prevention of Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity prevalence is a serious health concern in the society, which has attracted the attention of parents, caregivers and nutritionists because of the impact it has on the social growth of children. The problem has majorly been attributed to lifestyle such as living a sedentary life and eating fatty foods. Health experts view childhood obesity from these perspectives, which are also associated with the prevalence of the disease among other age groups. However, considering children have minimal impact in deciding the kind of health lifestyle they want to live, it is significant to understand the problem from a social point of view. In this regard, it is important to understand risk factors such gender, social factors, and race that have an impact on the economic status of a family, which then determine the kind of healthy lifestyle a child is subjected to by their families. Unlike other age groups, obesity has a negative impact on the lives of the children contributing to emotional distress and low self-esteem. Fortunately, there are several ways in which obesity can be prevented among children that include encouraging physical activity irrespective of the ground space available and avoiding unhealthy eating. Given this, the paper will discuss the prevalence of childhood obesity concerning societal factors, gender, and race, then highlight the effects it has on the children and the how it can be prevented.

The level of childhood obesity has reached proportions that are epidemic. Consequently, children are prone to myriad preventable chronic and acute medical problems most of which are linked to increased mortality and morbidity. Many environmental and social factors have had an adverse influence on the eating behavior and physical activity of adolescents and children. Time

pressures and financial pressures prompt many families to minimize the time for meal preparation and food cost respectively. As a result, the consumption of prepackaged convenience foods which have a high fat and calories level increases. Though the cause of childhood obesity is often debated, a group of researchers has linked it to socioeconomic factors and on the other hand, advocacy groups have pointed to mass media for luring children to consume junk food in their advertisements. As a response, food makers blame the lack of diet control by parents and physical activity. Despite the results of such debate, there are the key factors that have probably worked concurrently to increase childhood obesity prevalence.

Gender, race, and social factors are currently the leading childhood obesity causing factors especially in Hispanic, African American and Native American children (Wieting, 546). Contrary to the thirteen percent of obese white children, twenty-four percent Mexican American, twenty percent non-Hispanic African American and twenty-four percent African American children and adolescents are overweight. Approximately thirty-nine percent of Native American children are at a significant risk of being obese. Particularly, obesity prevalence is high among males who are Mexican-American that is twenty-seven percent of adolescents and children. Similarly, obesity is high in African American females, which are about twenty-two percent of the children and twenty-nine percent of the adolescents

Social factors have a significant role in the development of childhood obesity. Most of the urban neighborhoods lack outdoor produce stands, supermarkets and other healthy alternatives to convenience fast food outlets and stores, and this makes it hard for the residents to access and purchase inexpensive and fresh produce. The inner city neighborhoods also have minimal open spaces that can be used for physical activity, more violence, and traffic which prompts parents to keep children in the houses where they can only access video games,

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