

#overweight
#publichealth5-19service



OVERWEIGHT FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with information about being overweight and top tips to help you change your eating habits with links to helpful websites.

“I feel fat and it gets me down, I want to lose weight”

It's much easier to lose weight as a family rather than on your own. If one of your parents is obese, there is a 50 % chance that you too will also be obese (overweight). However, when both your parents are obese, this risk increases to an 80 % chance of you being obese.

Although certain medical disorders can cause obesity (unhealthy weight), less than 10% percent of all obesity is caused by genetics (passes on from your parents).

Obesity in childhood and adolescence can be related to:

- poor eating habits
- overeating or bingeing (eating too much)
- lack of exercise (i.e. couch potato kids)
- medical illnesses (endocrine, neurological problems)
- medications (steroids, some psychiatric medications)
- stressful life events or changes (separations, divorce, moves, deaths, abuse)
- family and friend problems
- low self-esteem (feeling bad about yourself)
- worried and low or other emotional problems
- family history of obesity
- socio-economic factors such as home environments and lifestyles

Obesity in children poses many potential health risks that are normally assumed to be adult disorders. This includes heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, asthma, fatty liver, infertility, polycystic ovaries and high cholesterol and often affects emotional well-being resulting in low self-esteem, worry, feeling low and bullying. All these conditions are preventable with a good weight management programme which aims to educate you about healthy eating and encourage exercise.

Identifying weight gain early in children and young people is essential so that early intervention is possible, the National Child Measurement Programme in reception and year 6 records your height and weight.

TOP TIPS FOR CHANGING EATING HABITS:

Tip 1: Eat when you are hungry not when you are bored. Be aware of your hunger cues and try to stay away from a 'clean plate' policy. Even babies who turn away from the bottle or breast send signals that they are full. Try not to promote over eating 'if you eat all your dinner you can have a pudding'. This will encourage you to eat for a reward, rather than because you are hungry.

Tip 2: Try not to talk about 'good foods' and 'bad foods'. It is not necessary to completely eliminate all sweets and favourite snacks from a menu. If you do, you may over eat these forbidden foods outside the home or sneak them for fear being judged.

Tip 3: As a family you should eat a wide variety of foods in moderation. Be aware of healthy portion sizes and steer away from 'king size' portions.

Tip 4: Try to eat meals together as a family. Sit at the table, rather than in front of the TV.

Tip 5: Encourage the family to exercise together. Try activities such as walking, cycling, swimming and other high energy activities, such as skating and bowling. This makes exercise fun rather than a chore.

Tip 6: Try to reduce the consumption of fizzy drinks. These are high in sugar, try replacing with water or fresh fruit juices.

Tip 7: Make sure your family has a breakfast of complex carbohydrates. These are slow release in energy such as cereals, toast, bananas. This will reduce the temptation for you to eat 'unhealthy' snacks during school breaks and will help you concentrate better at school. High sugar food can lead to agitated behaviours and poor concentration.

Tip 8: Reduce temptation of 'nibbling' on snack foods. Try cutting down on purchasing high sugar snacks and replace with fruit.

Tip 9: Involve the family in the preparation of food. This makes cooking and eating fun.

Tip 10: Eating is linked to emotions. When you feel upset comfort each other with a hug rather than a biscuit.

Tip 11: Consider the portion sizes you put on your plate. Increase the size of vegetable and salad portions.

VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/

NHS webpage that has a calculator to check body mass index

www.teenweightwise.com/

A site for 13-18 year olds, provides information on keeping healthy through food and physical activity

www.nhs.uk/change4life/your-childs-weight/home

School height and weight checks advice and information page from Change4life

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/very-overweight-children-advice-for-parents/

NHS Choices webpage providing healthy weight information and advice for parents/carers with very overweight children

www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/

NHS Information on the Eatwell Guide to achieve a healthy balanced diet

www.activecumbria.org/

A website to support people living in Cumbria to be physically active as part of everyday life

www.nhs.uk/change4life

A website full of information from the Change4Life campaign; to help families eat well and maintain a healthy lifestyle

www.healthforteens.co.uk/lifestyle/nutrition-diet/

Healthy eating and exercise advice for teenagers. Also has advice on lots of other subjects e.g. feelings, health, lifestyle relationships.

www.cwt.org.uk/

The Caroline Walker Trust web site providing evidence based information about healthy eating with useful picture guides of portion sizes for people of different ages, from weaning to adult

www.nutrition.org.uk/

Lots of advice about nutrition, includes information on healthy eating and nutrition course

www.kooth.com

Free online counselling for 11-18 year olds