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Childhood Obesity: United States

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Childhood Obesity

Overview

Childhood obesity is a noncommunicable disease that is caused by many factors, whether it be the kids' lifestyle choices, genetics, or even their environmental exposure. One of the main causative agents of childhood obesity in America is consuming more energy from food and drinks than your body needs. Often times, having follow up appointments with a doctor is recommended to make sure the patient has no other health risk factors.

How is this Condition Diagnosed?

This issue is identified through the Body Mass Index, BMI. The BMI scale will take the child's weight and height into account, and then compare it to the CDC growth charts. Falling between the 85 to 95 percentile on the chart is considered overweight, and the 95th percentile or above is considered obese (Obesity Society, 2014).

Signs/Symptoms

Childhood obesity happens in one in five school aged children (Obesity Society, 2014). Signs that you might have childhood obesity are, but not limited to, stretch marks on your skin, shortness of breath when you are physically active, reaching puberty at an earlier age and possibly irregular menstrual cycles for girls, but delayed puberty for boys, and even a dislocated hip (Mayo Clinic, 2016).

Causes

There are several causes of this health problem. The majority of these causes are not the fault of the child. One cause of the health problem is due to their family genetics (Kiener, 2015). When children are obese due to hereditary causes, losing the extra weight is very difficult because they are born with this issue. Another cause may be that the child is gaining weight due to lack of exercise. However, in most cases, the child's neighborhood or child's school may not have a playground or even a walking trail for physical activity (Boston Children's Hospital, 2018). In a few situations, the parents might be unwilling to allow their children to be outdoors in fear something bad might happen to them, not realizing they are causing their child to be at risk for other diseases. People often forget that children's surroundings and environment are an important aspect when it comes to maintaining good health and easier access to daily movement (Centers for Disease Control, 2016). Children's eating habits are reflective of their peers and their parents. Some children were raised at a lower socioeconomic status, which means they are unable to have access to healthy food choices, and eat what they are given from their parents (Ling et al., 2017).

Statistics In the U.S.

Over the past 30 years, the average weight for American children increased over 11 pounds (Kiener, 2015). In the U.S. alone, the populated races that are the most overweight are Hispanics,



African Americans, and Mexican Americans and Native Americans at 16%, 19%, and 35%-40%, respectively (Centers for Disease Control, 2016).

Epidemiology

Possible protective factors would be to give parents more information on childhood obesity so they can better understand how to improve their child's development. Educating the parents on this issue would allow them to find access to necessary vitamins or better and healthier food options. The prevalence in the U.S. is believed to be increasing from ages 2-19 (NCHS, 2017). Possible risk factors for overweight and obese children are that they are at a greater risk of developing asthma, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and high cholesterol which can also lead to chronic diseases (Centers for Disease Control, 2016).



http://www.communityvoiceks.com/living/health_and_wellness/childhood-obesity-is-a-big-health-problem/article_9ed76242-bbf5-11e6-b990-c7cf2a59047.html

Possible Solutions

Although obesity can be hereditary, possible solutions to reduce children's weight are to create more parks and walking trails in neighborhoods. Creating this environment for the children will help them reduce some of their body fat. Another possible solution is for schools and parents to provide healthier food options for the children. Their daycare center or school greatly affects their eating habits, considering that is the place where they spend the majority of their day. Schools have begun to promote healthy food choices and eating habits, even just by displaying the food pyramid that represents the food groups that are necessary for their body to properly function.

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