

Effects of Childhood Obesity

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), childhood obesity rates have tripled since 1980. Almost 20% of children aged 6 – 11 are now obese.

This results in a heightened risk of early-onset hypertension, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease in children and an increased risk of problems such as stroke, heart disease and diabetes as adults.

Many youngsters develop weight issues because they don't move enough. Working parents mean children come home to an empty house with two main activities: Screens (TV, video games, computers, etc.) and food, a lethal combination.

Parents need to model good exercise and eating habits

Insist on everyone eating breakfast (studies show breakfast eaters consume between 300 and 500 fewer calories in a day); limit visits to fast food restaurants; discourage soft drinks and high fat snacks and desserts and always have plenty of fruit on hand. Plan family hikes on weekends or trips to the local family friendly gym or work-out facility (like the YMCA).

Social issues

Bullying and teasing can create long-term feelings of low self-esteem in children. Parents need to contact their child's school guidance counselor if they suspect this is happening.

Tips for Losing Weight

- Share entrees with a friend
- Eat on smaller plates
- Order half portions and never order *biggie* sizes
- Avoid *All you can eat* buffets
- Always share a dessert
- Eat slowly, giving you time to digest
- Plate food, rather than bringing platters to the table to avoid second helpings
- Choose whole fruit over juice for extra fiber
- Drink plenty of water
- Go easy on salad dressings
- Load your plate half full with fruits and veggies



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Creating Healthy & Sustainable Families

www.vafcs_aafcs.org
www.aafcs.org
www.myplate.org
www.obesity.org
www.eatright.org
www.caoriecontrol.org

Taking Control of Your Health Affects Everybody!

A person doesn't live on an island. He lives with his family, his friends, his community, in the world. His health choices affect him, of course, but his choices can affect all aspects of the family. The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences' initiative for 2011 to 2012, brings this issue to the public. With health education, exercise training and more healthy cooking and eating knowledge we hope to help stem the tide of our country's obesity epidemic.

The Health Effects of Obesity

The effects of obesity on physical health are well documented. The Stanford Hospital (2010) reports obesity causes up to 300,000 premature deaths a year in the United States alone.

Obesity health effects range from backaches and joint pain to life-threatening conditions. The following is a list of health conditions attributed to obesity.

Obesity side effects include:

**Angina, Atherosclerosis
(hardening of the arteries)**

Cancer

Diabetes

Heart attack

High blood pressure

Joint pain

Metabolic syndrome

Mobility impairment

Osteoarthritis

Snoring and Sleep Apnea

Stroke

It's a question of math. Each pound equals 3500 calories. Too heavy? Either eat less or burn it off with exercise. The best solution is a combination of both. Research shows a diet that includes high quality protein-rich foods like lean meats, chicken and eggs; low-fat dairy; and foods that are low in fat and high in fiber (think *lots* of fruits and veggies and whole grain breads and pastas) in conjunction with daily exercise is the answer.

Mental Health Effects of Obesity

Unfortunately, effects from obesity do not stop with physical health problems. Many long-lasting mental health effects also plague those who have struggled with obesity, and in turn, affect their families.

- **Low self-esteem** can affect your relationship with your family, friends and co-workers.
- **Depression** affects you and as you struggle with it, those who love you.
- **Anxiety** can be debilitating and creates stress for you and everyone in your life.



Contact your local Family and Consumer Sciences professional to direct you to help with the obesity problem in your family. We can be found in Virginia Cooperative Extension offices, in middle and high schools, in various businesses, in colleges and universities and through the Virginia Department of Education. Look us up at www.aafcs_vafcs.org.

Possible Social Stigmas Associated with Obesity

- Mocking and discriminating runs through many cultures
- Bullying in school can be devastating for youngsters
- Social and romantic issues can create unhappy families and friendships
- College admission may be an issue
- Effects on earning power – employers may consider obesity a health risk
- Effects on careers exist in some professions
- Abuse and mocking from others is not fair, but does exist

Financial Effects From Obesity

When health issues arise, too many sick days may affect your job security

Food budgets are affected

Clothing budgets are affected with flip/flop weight gain and loss; tears; broken zippers, etc.

Larger sized clothing is often more expensive

Mattresses and furniture may need frequent replacement or repairs

Medical costs associated with obesity are diverted from family funds