

## WORDS

**although** =while

**average** =normally

**blood pressure** =the force with which blood travels through your body

**body mass index** = shows if you have the right weight for your height

**bowed** = curved

**confidence** =you believe in yourself and think that you can do something well

**definitely** = absolutely

**determine** =decide, control

**disease** = illness

**exercise** = physical activity that lets you stay healthy and makes you stronger

**explanation** =the reasons you give for why something happened

**factor** = one of many things

**fat cell** = a body cell that has fat in it

**gain weight** = to become heavier

**height** = how tall you are

**however**=but

**illness**= disease

**indicate** = show

**influence** =have an effect on

**instead of**= in something's place, as an alternative

**lack** = not enough

**measure** = calculate

**nutrient** =chemical or food that gives you important things you need to live

**obese** = another word for fat

**obesity** =fatness

**overweight** = to have too much weight

**physical** = everything that has to do with your body

**put on** = gain, become more

**run in** = is in

**scarce** = when there is not enough

**score** = number

**sign** = warning signal

**similar** = almost the same

**store** = to keep things somewhere until you need them

**study** = report

**type 2 diabetes** = a disease in which there is too much sugar in your blood

**use up** =to use all of something

**weight** = how heavy you are

**Studies** have shown that about 30% of all children in America aged 6 to 19 are either **overweight** or **obese**. That is almost one out of three young Americans. The situation in the countries of the European Union is **similar**.

The **body mass index** (BMI) is a formula to **measure obesity**. It uses a combination of **height** and **weight**. A BMI **score** of 25 or higher shows that you are **overweight** and a BMI of over 30 **indicates obesity**.



## WHO IS AT RISK?

If you are **gaining weight** it does not always mean that you are becoming **obese**. Children and young adults need **nutrients** in order to grow, so they **gain weight** as time goes on. **However**, if you consume more than you need and begin **putting on** extra weight you may be on the road to **obesity** - combined with all kinds of health problems.

Here are some **signs** that tell you if you are at risk:

- Children who have **obese** parents or grandparents are in greater danger of becoming **obese** than others.
- If **diseases** like high **blood pressure**, high cholesterol, **type 2 diabetes** or heart **illnesses run in** your family you might be at risk too.
- **Bowed** legs at an early age can be a warning signal for **obesity**.
- Depression and a **lack** of **confidence** have also been connected to obesity.
- People who don't get enough **exercise** and sit around and do nothing all day long are **definitely** more at risk than others.

## WHAT CAUSES CHILDHOOD OBESITY?

The **explanation** is really simple: if you take in more energy in the form of food than you **use up** you will **gain weight**. There are, **however**, many **factors** that can **influence** this.

Genes **determine** how your body **stores** food and how well it turns food into energy. Our bodies are built to **store** energy in **fat cells** for times when food is **scarce**. But not all bodies are the same. Your genes come from your parents, so **overweight** parents are more likely to have **overweight** children.



**Although** you may have good genes you still can become **obese**. One of the **main** causes of **obesity** is the **lack** of **physical exercise**. An **average** child spends less time **exercising** than children did ten or twenty years ago. Our free time activities have changed. **Instead of** going outside and doing something **physical** children sit still for hours in front of computers, TV and video games.

## WORDS

**ad**= short word for "advertisement"  
**adolescent**= a young person between 12 and 18 who is becoming an adult  
**affect** =to have an effect on  
**blindness** = if you cannot see anything  
**blood pressure** =the force with which blood travels through your body  
**bombard**= hit  
**candy** = a sweet food made from sugar and chocolate  
**carrot** = a long pointed orange vegetable that grows under ground  
**chances** = it is probable that...  
**common** = very often  
**consequence**= effect, result  
**cookie** = a small flat sweet cake  
**develop**= grow  
**disease**= illness  
**eat out**= to have a meal in a restaurant  
**excessive** = too much  
**fast food chain** = fast food stores that have the same name  
**fault** =someone is to blame  
**habit**= what you normally do  
**illness**= disease  
**increase** = to go up  
**instead of**= in something's place, as an alternative  
**kidney**= one of the two organs in your back that separate waste products from your blood and make urine  
**likely**= probably  
**mainly** = mostly  
**need** =something you must have  
**obese** = another word for fat  
**obesity** =fatness  
**offer** = give  
**overweight** = to have too much weight  
**pause**= break  
**reach for**= try to get  
**reason**=cause  
**series** = a number of  
**sleeping disorder** = if you have problems sleeping or cannot sleep well  
**soft drink** = a cold drink that does not have any alcohol in it  
**study** = report  
**treat** =cure, heal  
**type 2 diabetes** = a disease in which there is too much sugar in your blood  
**vending machine**= a machine from which you get drinks, cigarettes and something to eat by putting money into it  
**wheeze** = when you breathe you make loud noises in your throat and chest

## SNACKS AND FAST FOOD



Many of us eat up to four meals a day thanks to **excessive** snacking. And when we have a snack we don't eat a **carrot** or an apple. **Instead** we **reach** for junk food. But this is not always the children's **fault**. Schools are full of **vending machines** that **offer** high calorie snacks and sugary **soft drinks**. To make things worse they are **bombarded** with TV **ads** and **commercials** for unhealthy food. An **average** American eight-year old watches more than four thousand food **ads** a year. About 35% of these ads are for **candy** and snacks, another 10% for fast food.

Fast food is another **reason** for obesity. While some **fast food chains offer** healthy alternatives, these aren't what people order. Today's families also **eat out** a lot more than earlier generations.

## EATING HABITS AT HOME

If you **develop** healthy eating **habits** you'll be more **likely** to keep a healthy weight. And it's at home where we form such **habits**.

If your parents are **overweight** or **obese** **chances** are that you may have seen wrong eating **habits** your whole life. Children who observe their parents eat a **cookie** instead of a piece of fruit, take their meals in front of the TV set or eat too quickly are more **likely** to do the same. This **increases** their chances of becoming overweight children and, later on, adults.

## CONSEQUENCES

Apart from the **need** for larger school desks and airline seats what else is there to worry about.

- **Type 2 diabetes** was once thought to be a disease that **mainly affected** adults, but this not longer true. It can lead to **blindness**, heart and **kidney diseases** and damage your nerves.
- **Studies** have shown that **obesity** can cause children with asthma to use more medicine and **wheeze** more.
- Overweight children and **adolescents** are more likely to have high **blood pressure** than children with a normal weight.
- **Sleeping disorders** are among the most **common consequences** of childhood **obesity**. Some children may even have **pauses** in their breathing during sleep. If not **treated** it may lead to a **series** of other **illnesses**, including heart and lung problems.

