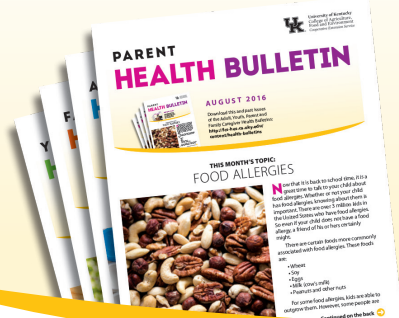


PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER 2019

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: CHILDHOOD OBESITY



September is National Childhood Obesity Month. Childhood obesity is a serious problem in the United States, affecting 1 in 5 children and adolescents, putting both children and adolescents at risk for poor health. In Kentucky, 20 percent of high school students are obese, ranking the state third in the nation for high-school-aged obesity.

A number of things can lead to a child becoming overweight or obese. Dietary habits, lack of physical activity, genetics, or a combination of these, which makes childhood obesity a complex health issue. To reduce childhood obesity rates in Kentucky, families need to make positive decisions about eating and moving together. Obesity during childhood can put kids at risk for medical problems now and in the future.

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Make healthy eating and exercise a family affair: let your kids help plan and prepare healthy meals, and play outside together.



➔ Continued from page 1

Obesity can lead to immediate increased health risks like:

- High blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Asthma and sleep apnea
- Liver and gallbladder disease
- Psychological problems such as anxiety and depression

Children who are obese are more likely to develop heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer, which were once considered adult diseases.

Doctors define being overweight or obese by using the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI uses a child's height and weight to estimate body fat. BMI is a good indicator of body fat, but it is not a perfect measurement. If you are worried about your kid's weight category, take your child or teen to see the doctor. For kids ages 2 through 19, doctors utilize this BMI chart to define weight categories:

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Weight Category	Percentile Range
Underweight	Less than 5th percentile
Healthy Weight	5th-85th percentile
Overweight	85th-95th percentile
Obese	At or above 95th percentile

The key to kids being a healthy weight is a whole-family approach. Make healthy eating and exercise a family affair. Get your kids involved by letting them help you plan and prepare healthy meals in the kitchen. Take them along when you go to the grocery store or farmers market to teach them how to make good food choices. Play outside together.

SOURCES:

- <https://www.stateofobesity.org/states/ky>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/overweight-obesity.html>

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Written by: Natalie Jones
Edited by: Alyssa Simms
Designed by: Rusty Manseau
Stock images: 123RF.com

