

Kelsey DuPree

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Childhood Obesity Abstract

How to solve the problem of obesity amongst school students is a major debate in the United States today? Obesity is defined as "the condition of being fat or overweight." Being overweight or obese is the result of "caloric imbalance"—too few calories expended for the number of calories consumed—and is affected by various genetic, behavioral, and environmental factors. The dietary and physical activity behaviors of children and adolescents are influenced by many sectors of society, including schools, families, communities, child care settings, medical care providers, the food and beverage industries and entertainment industries. Childhood obesity is worse than adult obesity because there at twice the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol. Since 1980, the obesity prevalence among children and adolescents has almost tripled. The prevalence of obesity in children more than tripled from 1971 to 2011. About one in three American kids and teens are overweight or obese. With good reason, childhood obesity is now the No. 1 health concern among parents in the United States, topping drug abuse and smoking. What are the socioeconomic causes of childhood obesity and how does childhood obesity impact the US economy?

About 23.5 million people live in food deserts. Nearly half of them are low-income families. Food deserts have been on the radar at public health departments for a while now, and many have already begun implementing strategies and policies to bring produce and other healthy foods to food deserts. Food deserts can be found in urban and rural areas alike, but there are some demographic characteristics that are likely to be present. Families with lower-incomes

are more likely to be overweight than families with higher income. Lower income families are limited in health resources and foods; therefore, these families may not have access to stores with healthier foods. Families with lower-incomes are more likely to be overweight than families with higher income.

Obesity is a costly epidemic; the total cost of obesity is 117 billion dollars, and this includes medical bills, wages of employees unable to work because of illness, disability, and premature death. Childhood obesity has both long immediate and long-term effects on health. The main cause of the obesity is the decreased level of nutrients intake. Consuming more energy from foods and beverages than the body uses for healthy functioning, growth, and physical activity can lead to extra weight gain over time. Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem. In addition, children and adolescents who battle with obesity suffer from social isolation, depression, and lower self-esteem. Serious health consequences, obesity has real economic cost that affects all of us. The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illness are a staggering \$190.2 billion or nearly 21% of annual medical spending in the United States. If obesity rates were to remain at 2010 levels, the projected savings for medical expenditures would be \$549.5 billion over the next two decades. As a community what are the important steps that should be taken to fight obesity? There a couple of steps. There a couple of steps that we should take first. First, we should become a role model for our children by educating young children on what is healthy and encourage physical activity. Second, we should encourage children to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. That can be challenging especially for our younger children.

Obesity is affecting our society economically and psychologically. There has been a significant increase in obese and overweight children from the lack of physical activity and unhealthy food choices. The obesity epidemic is an enormous health problem. Without the involvement of schools, the community, and involvement of parents, it will be difficult to reverse this epidemic. Educating young people about the importance of physical education and a healthy diet can make meaningful contributions to the society. This generation has a lower life expectancy than older generation because of the lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet.