

Childhood Obesity

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What is happening to our children's health? While we continue to make advances regarding medical cures, treatments and vaccinations, our society in general is becoming progressively overweight and obese. Not only is this a problem with the adult population but is now becoming a serious concern with children.

According to statistics from Dr. David Ludwig of Children's Hospital in Boston, up to 30 percent of children in the United States are overweight. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 25 years, and childhood diabetes has increased 10-fold in the past 20 years. According to a report on MSNBC, Dr. Ludwig stated, "It's one thing for an adult of 45 or 55 to develop type two diabetes and then experience the life-threatening complications of that – kidney failure, heart attack and or stroke – in their late 50's or 60s. But for a four year old or six year old who is obese to develop type two diabetes at 14 or 16 raises the possibility of devastating complications before reaching age 30".

A report found in the associated press stated that predictions have been made that within 50 years obesity likely will shorten the average life span of 77.6 years by at least two to five years which is more than the impact of cancer or heart disease.

Medical experts have made the prediction that children today may be the first generation in history with a shorter life expectancy than their parents. This is partially due to the increasing rate of childhood obesity and the increased risk of major diseases, including type two diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, that go with it which will also drive up healthcare costs.

Now the question is what can be done? There are several things to work on in order to help improve our own health and that of our children, including but not limited to: keep healthy foods in your house, limit eating out where foods typically are higher in fats and sodium, become physically active plan into your day time for physical fitness for you and your family, join a gym, go for a walk or play a sport and finally encourage those around you to do the same.

A recent study found in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* was performed on 48 children who were overweight or obese and were placed on an eight week, age appropriate three day a week resistance program. The results of the study showed significant reduction in absolute body fat of two point five percent, increased strength, and self image with no injuries with any of the participants. This New Year make a positive lifestyle change for your health and your children's

For more information on this subject contact Physical Therapy Specialists Clinic at 800-695-5899.