Childhood Obesity: Is it really that bad?
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Did you know …

- Three times as many teens today are overweight as compared to teens in 1980?
- Many obese children have high cholesterol and high blood pressure, both risk factors for heart disease?
- Obese children and adolescents have increased incidence of Type 2 Diabetes, ("adult-onset"). 50% of new diagnoses of Type 2 Diabetes are children!
- Obesity is also a risk factor for cancers, liver and kidney disease, joint pain and orthopedic problems, sleep apnea and asthma?
- Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults?

Why are kids gaining weight?

➔ Larger portions and more Calories - Between 1985 and 2000, average daily intake increased by 300 Calories. Most increases attributed to fast foods, namely hamburgers, french fries and soft drinks.

➔ More Calories, less nutrition - Less than one quarter of high school students ate “5-a-day” fruits and veggies. 30 years ago, children drank 4 times more milk than soda. Now, soft drink consumption has increased 137%.

➔ More eating out – Ages 11-18 eat at fast food restaurants at least twice a week. Fast food sales increased 300% between 1970 and 1980. Since 1980, fast food outlets have increased from 140,000 to 222,000. Portions are 3-4 times larger, with higher percentages of fat and sodium so children eat nearly twice as many Calories at fast food (770) as they do at home (420).

➔ Decreased activity, increased “screen time” - Most teens spend between 4 ½ to 6 hours in front of a TV screen and only 43 minutes reading.

➔ Increased sugar - Soda and juice consumption had doubled in girls, tripled in boys since 1980.
What can you do to help our children?

Families

- Be a role model and demonstrate healthy behaviors
- Stock your cupboards and refrigerator with healthy alternatives
- Make your own convenience foods
- Limit screen time and offer activities that burn calories
- Leave fruits and vegetables out where they can be seen/grabbed
- Limit soda, juice and caloric drinks in favor of water
- Get kids involved in meal planning and cooking
- Use rewards other than foods - try activities or sporting equipment
- Become an OSU Extension volunteer by taking the nutrition training and teaching in your community

Educators

- Be a role model and demonstrate healthy behaviors
- Support and enforce school wellness policy
- Donate your time educating in health, fitness, nutrition
- Teach health topics within your curriculum
- Plan short exercise breaks in your classroom
- Go on field trips with activities that support wellness
- Plant, cultivate and nurture healthy behaviors

What is Extension doing to help?

- Nutrition program assistants teaching in Coos and Curry schools
- Volunteers in nutrition and food safety teach community workshops
- Community presentations and trainings in nutrition by Registered Dietitian
- Collaborating with hospitals, health departments, schools, 4-H and other agencies to provide targeted programming
- Walk with Ease volunteers offer programs in Coos and Curry counties

Remember this...

Figure 1. Prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents ages 6-16 years

You may be the missing part of the solution.