

OBEISITY



DEFINITIONS:

Obesity is considered one of the great current medical problems. **Obesity** is defined as the presence of an abnormally large amount of body fat or adipose tissue. An individual who is obese is considered to be 20% or more above his/her body weight.

Overweight is defined as body weight above an established standard which is related to height. An individual who is overweight is considered to be 10% or more above his/her ideal weight.

The most common reason for being overweight is that the individual's food and caloric consumption is greater than energy expenditure.

It has been estimated that 10% or more of school-aged children are considered overweight.

CAUSES FOR OVERWEIGHT AND OBEISITY:

- Caloric imbalance
- Genetic factors
- Metabolic disturbances
- Endocrine dysfunctions (specifically pituitary and thyroid)
- Emotional disturbances

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE OBESE/OVERWEIGHT:

- Immature social and emotional behaviors
- Dislike of active games, exercises and sports
- Clumsy
- Slow
- Oversensitive
- Withdrawn
- Poor self-concept
- Prefers sedentary activities

TREATMENT AND PROGRAMMING:

- Encourage the student.
- Introduce a variety of activities to reduce boredom.
- Create an environment that will enable the student to have successful experiences.
- Develop an individualized regularly scheduled progressive exercise program.
- Conduct a program with a compatible, supportive social group.
- Conduct a weight control program. An effective weight control program includes:
 - Counting calories
 - Calculating energy expenditure
 - Cutting down on the amount of food consumed
 - Setting short-term goals
 - Provide frequent feedback about progress and give social reinforcement when weight loss occurs
 - Seeking medical attention if the problem is because of glandular dysfunction
 - Seeking counseling advice when emotional causes are the root of the problem
- Create progress charts for the student to chart his/her behavior.
- Give frequent rest periods.
- Monitor any type of strenuous physical activity.
- Avoid activities that involve quick movements or sudden stops which might damage the knee and ankle joints.
- Allow the student to have a locker in an empty room.
- Allow the student to leave early to dress.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Walking
- Bicycling
- Swimming
- Water aerobics

Most children who are obese/overweight continue to be obese/overweight in adulthood. Active lifestyles and sound nutrition practices should be initiated in the home. Parents need to serve as role models so that children will develop and continue a healthy lifestyle into adulthood.

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each individual must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.