Obesity is a growing health concern across the nation, especially with our nation’s children. Results from the 2003-2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), using measured heights and weights, indicate that an estimated 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2-19 years of age are overweight.

Taken directly from the National Center for Health statistics, “Childhood obesity involves significant physical and emotional health risks. In 2000, it was estimated that 30 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls born in the United States are at risk for being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives.”

Physical activity and proper nutrition are two key components to preventing and treating the disease of obesity. Physical activity can prevent or delay hypertension, prevent diabetes, increase bone density, decrease anxiety, improve body image and mood, improve scholastic performance in school, develop good physical fitness and promote weight control, just to name a few.

How Much Physical Activity is Enough?

The American College of Sports Medicine and Center for Disease Control recommend that adolescents and adults engage in 30 minutes or more a day of moderate intensity exercise most days of the week. It is recommended for children to engage in 60 minutes of moderate intensity exercise most days.

The Centers for Disease Control, the National Association for Sports and Physical Education and the American Heart Association all recommend a comprehensive daily physical education program for children K-12.
You can do something very informal. It does not have to be sports or dance class. Walk to the park, wash the car, nature walk/hike and walk to the library or the store. Get the whole family involved, even pets!

5. Be supportive
- Children of all ages need acceptance and encouragement.
- Use positive reinforcement of the physical activities.
- Be sensitive and find activities that are not difficult or that may cause embarrassment.
- Add variety and let them choose.

Did You Know?
- Only 25 percent of high school students participate in daily physical education (PE).
- Only 19 percent of high school students are active for at least 20 minutes a day during PE class.
- Only 47 percent of middle/junior high schools and 26 percent of high schools require at least three years of physical education.

What are the Benefits of Formal Physical Education?
- Develops motor skills
- Promotes physical fitness
- Increases energy expenditure
- Promotes positive attitudes
- Enhances academic performance
- Enhances good mental health and self concepts

What Can We as a Society, as Parents and Family Members, as well as Educational Professionals Do?

1. Get yourself moving
- Be a good role model for your kids/community.
- Children of active parents are SIX times more likely to be active than kids whose parents are sedentary.
- Make it a joint effort!

2. Shut off the television, video games and computers
- Set guidelines.
- More than 60 percent of childhood obesity is directly related to watching too much television.
- The rate of obesity rises 2 percent for each hour of television watched a day.

3. Promote PE in school
- When your child is registering, encourage them to take a physical education class.
- If your child is in day care, make sure it offers at least 20 minutes of physical exercise/activity a day.

4. Promote activity rather than exercise
- Sometimes when we call it “exercise,” it can have negative feelings or thoughts associated with it. Activity and movement are much less charged words.
- Try free play activities such as: tag, hide and seek, hopscotch, jump rope, Simon says, capture the flag, etc.

Resources:
1. win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/child.htm
2. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5336a5.htm
3. www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines

About the Author:
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Did You Know?
- At least 75 percent of Americans live within a 2-mile walking distance from a public park.

Where is your nearest park?
The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a non-profit patient organization dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of those affected by obesity, morbid obesity and childhood obesity. The OAC distributes balanced and comprehensive patient educational materials and advocacy tools.

The OAC believes that patients should first be educated about obesity and its treatments and also encourages proactive patient advocacy. The OAC focuses its advocacy efforts on helping patients gain access to the treatments for morbid obesity. As a membership organization, the OAC was formed to bring patients together to have a voice with issues affecting their lives and health. To learn more about the OAC, visit [www.obesityaction.org](http://www.obesityaction.org) or contact us at (800) 717-3117.

**OAC Resources**

The OAC provides numerous beneficial resources for patients, as well as professionals. All OAC resources are complimentary and may be ordered in bulk. To request materials, please contact the OAC National Office at (800) 717-3117 or send an email to info@obesityaction.org.

**Newsletters**

- Obesity Action Alert - the OAC’s free monthly electronic newsletter
- OAC News - OAC’s quarterly education and advocacy newsletter

**Brochures/Guides**

- Are you living with Obesity?
- Advocacy Primer: Your Voice Makes a Difference
- BMI Chart
- OAC Insurance Guide
- State-specific Advocacy Guides
- Understanding Obesity Series
  - Understanding Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Obesity Poster
  - Understanding Morbid Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Childhood Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Childhood Obesity Poster

**OAC Membership**

The OAC was founded as the “patient voice” in obesity. As a membership organization, the OAC exists to represent the needs and interests of those affected by obesity and provide balanced and comprehensive education and advocacy resources. Membership in the OAC is integral in strengthening the voice of the millions affected by obesity. Various membership levels are available and each is accompanied with several valuable benefits such as:

- Official membership card/certificate
- Annual subscription to OAC News – OAC’s quarterly educational and advocacy newsletter
- Subscription to Obesity Action Alert – monthly e-newsletter distributed on the 1st of each month
- Access to valuable educational resources and tools
- Patient representation through advocacy, in addition to information on advocacy issues concerning patients

Yes! I would like to join the OAC’s efforts. I would like to join as a/an:

- Patient/Family Member: $20
- Professional Member: $50
- Physician Member: $100
- Surgeon Member: $150
- Institutional Member*: $500 (Surgery centers, doctors’ offices, weight-loss centers, etc.)
- OAC Chairman’s Council*: $1,000 + * These membership levels have exclusive benefits.

Name: ________________________________
Company: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
City: ______________ State: ______ Zip: __________
Phone: __________________ Email: __________________

**Payment Information**

Enclosed is my check (payable to the OAC) for $ ________.

Please charge my credit card for my membership fee:

- [ ] Discover®
- [ ] MasterCard®
- [ ] Visa®
- [ ] Amex®

Credit Card Number: ________________________
Expiration Date: __________ Billing Zip Code: __________

**Mail to:**
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Tampa, FL 33614

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(813) 873-7838