

Video link - [ECEY5009](#)

How The Effect of Obesity impacts the health and wellbeing of a child

From this presentation I will be discussing obesity and how this effects the health, wellbeing and lifestyle of children, understanding the causes and behaviours can result in obesity for children and how it may be prevented or helped for the benefit of young children living and leading a healthy life. According to NHS England (2024), it states that one in 8 children in the UK are classed as obese between the ages of two and ten. The World Health organisation (2025) states from the statistics from 2024 showed that 35 million children under the age of 5 were overweight. A way to regularly check the weight of a child or adult is to check their body mass Index (BMI). The NHS uses BMI to check and track an individual's weight and to help gain or maintain a healthy weight (NHS, 2023).

The Causes of Obesity

Diet is a main cause of obesity, whether it be in the form of over-eating large volumes of processed or foods high in fat or simply eating larger portions than needed. These types of food have become more popular in society as processed foods have become less priced than fresh nutritional foods, processed foods have been made easier and more convenient than fresh homemade meals due to being heavily promoted to the public (NHS 2023). Mayo Clinic (2025) suggests that if children come from families that gain weight easily then their children will likely gain weight at the same rate.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE, 2025) states, the lack of physical activity has massively contributed to the rise in obesity. In the UK the population is less than 20% active than the population back in the 1960s. a rising cause of obesity is when families have a heavily influenced lifestyle of screen time, a screen-time lifestyle is when sitting and watching tv is taking over physical activity time. This leaves children watching endless hours of Tv and being shown advertisement for fast foods, sweets and unhealthy food choices.

Environmental factors such as unsafe conditions to be physically active have become more apparent over the years due to roads becoming busier and walking paths less known. From a study conducted with parents they chose to drive children to school due to long distances, however a large majority of parents stated that children did not have safe, well-lit walking routes and the fear of strangers and predators that could be around (Sahoo, 2015).

NICE (2025) also suggests that another cause of obesity is genetics. The article states that obesity genetics can affect up to 40-70% of individuals. There can be specific gene mutations that cause medical conditions passed on through the genetic pool such as hyperthyroid, growth hormone deficiency or metabolic syndrome, these all potentially lead to weight gain and obesity.

Griffiths (2011) states that obesity can affect children's behaviour from young ages. From case studies of boys and girls it found that five-year-old boys lacked attention skills, and 5-year-old girls had strained relationships with peers.

Consequences

World Health organisation (2024), states that being obese comes with a serious risk to your health, carrying extra fat and weight can cause strain on the body, leaving an individual with lifelong effects such as cardiovascular diseases. According to Cafasso (2022), obesity can affect the whole body due to the strain on areas around the body tis can put a huge impact on the nervous system leading to a lack of oxygen to the brain, this then results in stroke. Another health risk of obesity due to the build of fat around the neck, it can cause the airways to become smaller leading to sleep apnoea. Sleep apnoea could result in the breathing process in your sleep to stop for short periods of time, from this the body is not taking in enough oxygen depriving the main areas of the body like the brain or heart.

Another consequence of obesity is diabetes. The body produces insulin to keep blood sugar at a safe level, when an individual is obese this can affect the body by increasing the risk of becoming insulin resistant and developing diabetes (Mayo Clinic, 2023). Up to 80-85% of individuals who have type-2 diabetes are obese or overweight, studies also showed that people who are overweight have 80 times more likely chance to develop diabetes than individuals with a BMI lower than 22 (Watts, 2025).

Henessy (2023) suggests that obesity can also psychologically affect an individual's health. Studies have shown that those who are overweight or obese have an elevated rate of mental health issues. Mental health can be a contributing factor into weight gain, this can make an individual become tired and withdrawn leaving them exercising less. However, mental health is not the only reason that weight gain may occur. Becoming overweight leaves individuals feeling shame or developing low-self-esteem, this then further effects their social skills as they will become withdrawn or stop socialising due to feeling embarrassed.

However, according to World Obesity (no date), weight stigma is also a huge impact on mental health as people will often assume negative opinions of laziness, bad hygiene or unattractiveness. This stigma leaves individuals directly effects their mental health negatively as they are left feeling embarrassed or unhappy with themselves.

Prevention

Office for Health Improvements and Disparities (2021) states there are many different schemes to help a families and their children to avoid becoming obese, or prevent any further weight gain, this can be helped by The Healthy child Programme, where parents and guardians will be offered numerous screening tests and appointments in order to inform them ad guide them in making healthy life choices

for themselves and their children. The programme can also offer support and guidance in benefits such as the Healthy start scheme. The healthy start scheme is eligible to mothers who are over 10 weeks pregnant or if you have a child under 4, this scheme can also support in advice on healthy eating but can also offer vouchers to help with milk for infants and for vouchers to buy healthy foods such as vegetable, fresh or frozen, fruit and cow's milk. This scheme will also support women in their pregnancies in gaining vitamins or early infant vitamins to start a healthy lifestyle early in a child's life (NHS, 2025).

NHS England (no date) states that health care professionals also have a duty to help the children in their care to make sure that they are living a healthy life, in school's practitioners can run schemes for children aged 5-12 years on the healthy school child programme. This programme is directly linked to the Healthy Child Programme however this widens the support from health care professionals in more areas of life like schools and GPs to help support a child's health and wellbeing.

The Government (2017) have tried to prevent children from being exposed to sugary drinks across the UK to give children a better start in their early life. This means that the drink products being advertised and sold across the country will need to show that they are lowering the sugar added to the drinks, all while the producers are changing their drinks the public will be encouraged to choose healthier alternatives.

Exercise

CDC (2024) suggests that family routines have a huge impact on a child's weight. The role of the family is to show and instil into children a healthy lifestyle from the very beginning by modelling a healthy eating pattern by showing them eating fruits and vegetables to supply them with the right nutrients to help their body thrive. With this exercise should be a standard in the family. Allowing children to be more active and exercise while they are young has many benefits for their future such as a lower risk of cardiovascular issues later in life. The other benefits of physical exercise can help to improve children's memory and attention skills, ensure children and strengthening their muscles and endurance, reduce risks of diseases and support their mental health as being physical can reduce the likelihood of depression (CDC, Physical activity basics, 2024).

The Role of Technology

Obesity costs the NHS £6 million every year and by the year 2050 its set to go up to £9.7 (Department of Health and Social care, 2022).

Government Office for Science (2007) states the role of technology has shown that Television can keep individuals occupied for multiple hours throughout the week and is becoming largely more available for the younger generations. However, the article suggests that even though so many hours are being lost to television this is being taken into consideration by trainers making virtual or online sessions for individuals to take part from their home.

Robinson (2017) suggest that the role of technology is interfering with children sleep schedules which is leaving children's bedtimes later, this puts strain on the body and affect the body's hormones. When a child is not getting enough sleep, this could affect the appetite-regulating hormones, and due to tiredness, this increases the hormone making children eat more.

In conclusion, childhood obesity is a serious and rapidly growing concern for the new generations, the effects on their health but also the social, emotional and mental wellbeing. There are a wide range of causes that contribute to obesity, factors such as diet, lack of exercise, family lifestyles or habits passed down to children and potentially genetics. With these effects come risks to currant life or an individual's future, effects such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes are life-long conditions that cannot always be cured, there are also the psychological effects of low-self-esteem or mental health issues that can be difficult to recover from as they can leave severe damage to an individual's idea of themselves.

However, childhood obesity can not only be managed but also preventable when receiving the right support and care from family, practitioners and medical professionals. Practitioners in a child's life can support them by encouraging the use of the healthy school programmes or the government reducing the amount of sugar advertised and in the products being sold within the UK. To encourage families to work together for the best interest of the family and children they should aim to promote healthy meal choices, work together closely to increase the amount of physical exercise they all achieve and reducing the amount of screen time children are having and replacing that time with physical exercise and healthier choices to reduce the behaviours shown from the use of technology and taking the first steps to tackling this issue.

By directly addressing the causes of obesity and encouraging more healthy habits from the early years of a child's life, this can help improve a child's health and wellbeing from the beginning and to improve their quality of life for their future to lead healthy fulfilling lives.

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