

Childhood obesity, an 'exploding nightmare'

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New Delhi, Jun 15 (ANI): Obesity has adverse effects on health as well as the psychology of the children, says an expert.

Childhood obesity is a condition in which a child is significantly overweight for his or her age and height. India reportedly witnesses 10 million cases of [Childhood obesity](#) annually. The condition can't be cured but the treatment can help severely.

Methods to determine body fat directly are difficult; the diagnosis of obesity is often based on BMI. For children and adolescents, overweight and obesity are defined using age and sex specific normograms for body mass index (BMI). Children with BMI equal to or exceeding the age-gender-specific 95th percentile are defined obese.

Due to the rising prevalence of obesity in children and its many adverse health effects it is being recognized as a serious public health concern. The term overweight rather than obese is often used in children as it is less stigmatizing for them and their psychological stability.

Childhood obesity, also known as pediatric obesity usually is self-diagnosable, as the weight of the child increases abnormally. Lab tests or imaging are often required for tracking the condition medically.

Childhood Obesity can further lead to diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. 70 percent of obese youth had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.

Dr. Atul N. C. Peters, Director -Bariatric & Metabolic Surgery, Fortis Hospital says, "When it comes to kids, most parents like to see them as little and chubby. For parents, chubby is cute. But it is one thing to be a cute, chubby baby and another to be a "fat kid", the difference needs to be noted by the parents. Obesity has its adverse effects, on health as well as the psychology of the children."

"Childhood Obesity has certain long term health effects. Children and adolescents who are obese in their childhood are most likely to be obese as adults. It may act as a major factor for various adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. And as in the country it is one of the fastest growing problems, prevention for it must be taken before hand for the children," he further said.

"Children are the future of the country, they must be healthy and fit to live a content and happy life and for the betterment of the country. Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases. Also, families, communities, schools, child care settings, medical care providers, faith-based institutions, government agencies and other institutions of the likes should be equally concerned and act responsible towards childhood obesity," he added.

Earlier this year, World [Health Organization](#)'s (WHO) commission, attracting attention on the rising cases of childhood obesity, had said that childhood obesity is "an exploding nightmare."

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The commission on childhood obesity found that 41 million under-fives overweight or obese. Many children are growing up in environments encouraging weight gain and obesity. The statistics mean that 6.1 percent of under-fives were overweight or obese in 2014, compared with 4.8 percent in 1990. The number of overweight children in lower middle-income countries like India more than doubled over the same period, from 7.5 million to 15.5 million. Nearly 48 percent of all overweight and obese children aged under five lived in Asia, and 25 percent in [Africa](#). (ANI)

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