

A B C D E F G H Children's Health

Childhood Obesity On The Rise; Positive Parental Role Can Help

(NAPSA)—According to the latest government figures, 48 percent of U.S. children are considered overweight or seriously overweight. The top culprits remain lack of exercise and poor dietary habits.

As a result, health problems once associated mainly with adults are becoming more common in children, including asthma, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension.

Maryana Winston, M.D., a pediatrician in Mahwah, New Jersey, sees the rise in childhood and adolescent obesity as an epidemic. Fortunately, lifestyle changes can help reverse the risk factors of certain diseases. She recommends beginning by changing habits at home, away from the lure of vending machines and where parents can serve as good role models.

“Minimize sedentary activities by being physically active as a family and limiting TV or computer time,” says Dr. Winston. “Never put your child on a crash diet—instead, adjust eating and drinking habits by eating home more often, decreasing portion sizes and stocking up on healthy foods,” she adds.

Many people don't realize that each 12-ounce serving of a carbonated, sweetened soft drink can



Good-tasting filtered water can help kids give up sugary sodas.

contain the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of sugar. For this reason, the first dietary modification Dr. Winston suggests for all overweight children is to remove juice and soda from their diet; both are full of empty, unneeded calories.

Instead, encourage consumption of water and milk to provide the necessary nutrients and hydration. A water filtration pitcher, like those made by Brita, placed on a counter or in the refrigerator, can serve as a reminder to kids by giving them easy access to great-tasting, zero-calorie water.

Visit the Brita Web site (www.brita.com) for more information on hydration, weight and health.