

What Causes or Contributes to Obesity?

According to the latest statistics, 30% of British children between the ages of 2 and 15 are overweight. 17% of British boys and 16% of girls fall in the obese category. Children's life expectancy is now predicted to be lower than adults.

There has been a global shift in diet towards increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in [bad] fats and sugars, but low in vitamins, minerals and other micronutrients. This along with a trend towards decreased physical activity has had a large impact on worldwide increase in obesity rates.

Sugar and Processed / Fast / Junk Foods

The processed food and sugar industry are largely to blame for our current health crisis. The obesity epidemic is a direct outgrowth of a poor diet of processed foods with their cheap non-nutritive fillers, artificial ingredients, and synthetic chemical additives.

Processed and fast foods are highly refined and low in fibre. They are also high in sodium [low-quality salt] and sugar, all of which contribute to obesity as well as to other health problems such as diabetes and heart disease.

Even the standard breakfast of processed cold breakfast cereals and skim milk is loaded with sugar which quickly turns into fat in the body, so please don't fall for the flawed notion that cereal is an ideal breakfast food.

Sugar

Sugar is more addictive than cocaine. The brain reacts strongly to sugar and craves it, similar to an addict craving drugs. Savvy marketing plays on the addictive quality of sugar.

By reducing fat content in food, sugar intake increased dramatically. When the food giants removed healthy fats from ice cream and other processed foods, they replaced the fat with sugar to make the taste palatable. Foods with fats removed taste bad and only by replacing fat with sugar were the taste of processed foods saved.

The World Health Organisation in 2002 recommended a reduction of sugar intake to 10% of one's diet. WHO recommended a further reduction to 5% in 2014, based on current research. 5% or 23 grams of sugar daily, is a challenge, given that sugar is hidden in so many processed foods (e.g. in the form of high fructose corn syrup).

Sugar also includes honey (healthy in small doses), maple syrup (healthy in small doses), white sugars, fruit juices.

Processed Foods / Fast / Junk Foods

Junk food is a term applied to some foods that are unhealthy and have low or poor nutritional value. Junk foods are high in [bad] fats, sodium [bad salt], and sugar, which can lead to obesity and a range of attendant health problems.

By focusing on children, the processed food industry creates lifelong consumers of their 'junk food'. Their powers are similar to that of the tobacco industry years ago. The bottom line is corporate profits.

Junk food doesn't contain the nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. As a result, you may feel chronically fatigued and lack the energy you need to complete daily tasks. The high levels of sugar in junk food puts your metabolism under stress; ... fast food and junk food don't contain adequate amounts of protein and good carbohydrates, so your blood sugar levels drop suddenly after eating, leaving you feeling grumpy, fatigued, and craving sugar.

If children consume more than energy than they use – even just 2% - it will result in the development of obesity over time. A 2% imbalance can be as little as two-thirds of a chocolate cookie, or fewer than two French fries.

In the US (but UK is comparable):

(a) Each day, 1 in 4 Americans visit a fast food restaurant; (b) In 1972 we spent \$3 billion on fast food, but today we spend more than \$110 billion; (c) McDonald's feeds more than 46 million people a day; (d) French fries are the most eaten vegetable in America; (e) You would have to walk for seven hours straight to burn off a Super Sized Coke, fries, and Big Mac; (f) 60% of all Americans are either overweight or obese; (g) Surgeon General David Satcher: "*Fast food is a major contributor to the obesity epidemic*"; (h) Most nutritionists recommend not eating fast food more than once a month.

Some examples of processed / fast / junk foods include:

Fried foods, burgers, salty snack foods, chips or French fries, take-out pizzas, crisps, biscuits, cakes, low cocoa chocolate, sugar-rich desserts, highly processed breakfast cereals, white bread, wholemeal bread, potatoes, sweets, artificial sweeteners.

Carbohydrates: Fructose and Grains

Refined fructose, typically in some form of corn syrup, is now found in virtually every processed food and fast food meal you can think of. Fructose actually 'programs' your body to consume more calories and store fat.

A vast majority of corn-based fructose is genetically engineered and heavily contaminated with the toxic herbicide glyphosate - the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup. Glyphosate residues, found in most commonly consumed foods in the Western diet via sugar, corn, soy, and wheat, disrupt normal body functions and cause disease.

Grains quickly turn to sugar and then fat in your child's body. Corn is fed to geese to fatten their livers for foie gras – yet we are told to eat lots of grain and not much fat. Also most grains contain insoluble fibre which can worsen digestive problems such as IBS etc. (Please note that although oats are a grain, they contain healthy soluble fibre which aids digestion and keeps waste matter moving through the body.)

Some examples of carbohydrates

Grain-based and dairy desserts, cakes, biscuits, doughnuts, pies, crisps, yeast breads, pasta, pizza, fizzy drinks.

When a child starts out with a diet of processed fructose, trans-fats (see separate sheet on “Good Fats, Bad Fats, and Obesity”), and refined grains, excessive weight gain is not a mystery outcome - it’s almost inevitable.

Not Just Calorie Intake

150 calories of pure sugar in the form of soda or coke or other carbonated drink is not the same as 150 calories of a fruit. Soda, for example, is immediately converted to fat in the body, while a piece of fruit with its fibre content does not overwhelm the body with a quick sugar load. Fruits also contain important vitamins and nutrients.

Fruit juices contain little, if any, actual fruit and hundreds of grams of sugar in a litre. A growing number of studies have linked rising childhood obesity rates to increased consumption of sugary drinks.

Wholesome Food

Wholesome food is ‘live’ and typically raw. It will wilt and decompose. The fact that fast food burgers, buns, and fries do not decompose – even after a decade – is a clear sign that it’s just not real food and isn’t beneficial for your child. Children need real nutrients, not man-made chemicals that are non-existent in natural food.

The simplest way back toward health for your children is to focus on ‘whole’ foods – foods that have not been processed or altered from their original state; food that has been grown or raised as God intended, without the use of chemical additives, pesticides, and fertilizers.

Try to maintain regular meals and don’t skip breakfast. Also, drink lots of water. Snack on healthy stuff. By doing this, and eating meals together as a family, your children will receive the proper nutrition their bodies need during the important developmental years while also developing a love for whole fresh foods that will last them a lifetime.

Quoted, Summarised, and Edited from the Following Sources:

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