



# What Do You Really Know About Child Obesity?

**W**e always hear about child obesity and the effects of it but why aren't we doing anything about it? Child obesity affects 1 in 3 children in the UK

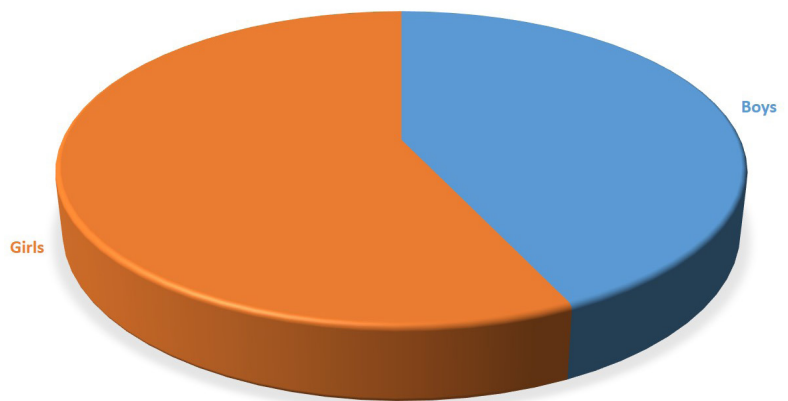
With a growing number of children being obese in the UK are parents really taking child obesity seriously? According to Weight Loss Resources '25 per cent of boys and 33 per cent of girls aged between two and 19 years are overweight or obese – and there's little sign the incidence is slowing' The number of children who have been diagnosed with obesity has more than tripled within the last 25 years.

With such a high number of children being overweight or obese health experts are growing worried about the health of these children and even the effects on which they may have in their adult lives.

There are a number of health risks to your child if they are obese.

The number one risk for a child with obesity is high cholesterol or high blood pressure. 60% of children between 5-17 with obesity have these problems according to National Institutes of Health; 2010. Other effects which are caused by obesity include Type 2 diabetes, asthma, Obstructive Sleep apnoea (OSA), Cardiovascular (CVD) risk factors, Musculoskeletal problems and even mental health problems through low self esteem, body dissatisfaction, eating disorders and weight-based teasing.

CHILDREN THAT ARE OBESE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 2-19



**Mum of 2 Sarah Howard has a child of 6 who has been diagnosed with obesity ' My son has always been big but I never thought for once he was obese. We went to the doctors to talk about his weight as he doesn't like vegetables or fruit and very rarely eats healthy food. He's a very fussy eater so as a parent I want to see my child happy so I give him the dinners that he wants. I was shocked when the doctor told me his BMI , I need to be more strict with his diet.'**

# Why Have We Seen Such An Increase In Child Obesity?

The University's Centre for Diet and Activity Research have stated that "The increase in the price difference between more and less healthy foods is a factor that may contribute towards growing food insecurity, increasing health inequalities, and a deterioration in the health of the population." This is a big factor when looking at child obesity and the diets which parents are giving their children. Poorer household will suffer more from the effect of child obesity as there is more cheaper unhealthy foods on the market than there is healthy food. As healthy food is much more expensive than unhealthy parents are more likely to buy these products.

Denise Pell mother of 3 said states that she finds its a lot easier to budget her weekly food shop when she doesn't buy fresh ingredience to cook for her children. ' my weekly food shop isn't always unhealthy but with the budget I have I sometimes find it a lot easier to buy £1 packets of chocolates for the children

than to spend £3 or more on fruit portions which doesn't last them 5 minutes. I do try and cook healthy dinners for my children but when it comes to snacks especially I usually go for whatever is on offer and that's normally unhealthy treats. It is hard to budget when your always buying healthy food, even the healthy cereal is more expensive than the not so healthy options'

Eating unhealthy food is not only a main cause of child obesity. University College London researchers found that half of all UK seven-year-olds do not do enough exercise. This is a huge factor when looking at child obesity. 51% of the 6,500 children whom they monitored accomplished the recommended hour of physical activity each day. Keeping your kids active is also a big importance when maintaining their weight.



## Over weight children : top 5 parent tips

- Be More active
- Replace fizzy drinks with diet or juice drinks
- Have smaller meal portion sizes
- do weekly shopping trips and look at different meals to prepare
- enrol children in after school activities