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## **UNICEF**

### **Childhood obesity in first world countries**

Ensuring a sustainable and healthy future for children and adolescents is essential for a sustainable and healthy world. A renewed focus on children and adolescents, their families, and communities: investment in people and human capital, as well as the environments that sustain them, is at the heart of achieving health and well-being. Obesity is taking away much of that well-being for children and adults. It is removing many opportunities that every human being should have. <sup>1</sup>Obesity is a leading death cause in the US facilitating diseases like diabetes, heart problems, and some forms of cancer. Nevertheless, the mental problems are even worse with things like depression, shame, guilt, lack of trust, bipolar disorder, agoraphobia, etc...

<sup>2</sup>Most people think obesity is eating too much and exercising too little and although that could be a definition, it is a poor one. There are a lot more factors that come into play when talking about obesity. The hormones that make you hungry are different for every one of us. Food, especially junk food, is everywhere now. Shops display unhealthy foods where they are most likely to gain your attention. Junk food is often cheaper than healthy, whole foods. Some people, especially in poorer neighborhoods, don't even have the option of purchasing real foods, like fresh fruit and vegetables.

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<sup>1</sup> *Childhood obesity - Symptoms and causes.*

<sup>2</sup> *Childhood Obesity: Causes & Prevention*



They are forced, due to their economic state, to purchase processed and chemically built food that is unhealthy<sup>3</sup>.

Many websites spread inaccurate or even incorrect information about health and nutrition. Some news outlets also oversimplify or misinterpret the results of scientific studies and results are frequently taken out of context because parents are more likely to purchase highly processed food that is advertised as nutritious, healthy, tasty and convenient. Crash-diets are messing with people's digestive system and even if they reduce the weight at first, in the long run, they are worse, but people don't know. People are more stressed lately and those stress hormones transform in a way to abdominal fat and make you want to eat, especially calorie rich food. Hours of sleep have been reduced, consequently increasing our stress levels (increasing our cortisol) and deregulating other appetite hormones. We are also increasingly taking more medications, many of which have weight gain as a side effect. If childhood obesity rates continue to soar, half of all Australian children will be overweight by the year 2025<sup>4</sup>.

Food advertisers play a lot with visual stimuli making you want to eat that. They aim to alter dietary behaviors in children using internet, television and advertisements in their

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<sup>3</sup> *10 Leading Causes of Weight Gain and Obesity*. Healthline.

<sup>4</sup> *Childhood overweight and obesity in developed countries: Global trends and correlates*. Oxford Academic.



homes or schools. A study shows<sup>5</sup> that schools without snack bars or pouring rights contracts where beverage manufacturers exclusively control the beverage distribution in school showed significantly lower intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and energy-dense food per school child.

Obesity is destroying the childhood of one in every five children in the WORLD.

Obesity numbers are greater than people starving in the worldwide<sup>6</sup>. A stop should be put to it as soon as possible. Previous attempts to reduce obesity have been unsuccessful. This is a hard problem since Obesity involves so many different factors such as: psychology, hormones, money, exercise, food, screen-time, parents, and many other small things that all add up to a healthy life.

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<sup>5</sup> *A Systematic Review on the Influence of the Food Industry on Obesity-Related Dietary Behaviour among Children.*

<sup>6</sup> *The State of Childhood Obesity.*



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