A Parent-Child Cooperative program to Fight Obesity

A cooperative activity log which schools can use to promote healthier eating habits and a more physically active lifestyle for both children and parents.

Tag Words: obesity, physical activity, childhood, parents, teachers, psychological.

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Summary (MD)

Obesity is an epidemic which affects today’s society greatly. Not only does it shorten a person’s life span, but also causes many other health problems. Adults who are obese are more likely to have obese children. Children who are currently overweight have more chances of growing up overweight and possibly obese as well. Things such as technology, food and environment play great major roles for obesity. Children’s lives are being engaged by technology, whether it’s by television, video games, computers, or even cell phones. Not just children, but parents as well do not have time away from technology. This is why now a days less meals are being prepared at home and fast food restaurants’ food is being consumed by majority of America. One way of stopping the over spread of obesity is to have schools get involved. Like a Book It program, this program will encourage students to get involved in more physical activities and eventually put an end to their current sedentary lifestyles. This program encourages children to spend more time with their parents, whether it is grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, or going on walks together. This program is designed to lessen the use of technology and also the number of visits families make to fast food restaurants.

Video Link:

Obesity movie.wmv: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQR4Xqpm84
The Issue: Obesity

Introduction & Overview (ST)
The epidemic of obesity is a major problem in today's society. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that obesity will soon outnumber tobacco as the top underlying preventable cause of death in the United States. Children are increasing their waist sizes while reducing their IQ's at an alarming rate, all while their parents are shortening their lives and raising their cholesterol. This problem is not to be taken lightly, and needs to be on the forefront of research and medicine, as it is the contributing too many deaths each year. The food that people eat and environmental factors, as well as physiological, and sociological state, contributes to the well that it put in peril by this crisis. Obesity is not a small scale problem, but is a large one that is doing more damage to society than global warming, smoking, and murder combined. It is a silent killer that takes its time and destroys a person from the inside out, starting with the body and working to the personality and mind. The chronic disease has links to many psychological as well as physical deficiencies that can cause a person to become holistically ill. It leaches to their bodies and minds and can almost literally drain the life out of any person of any race, gender, or age. This is done through depression and low energy levels.

According to the Nursing and Allied Health, "Obesity is a state in which an individual has stored body fat in amounts far exceeding biological need. Usually it is a result of a small but chronic positive energy imbalance that continues over many years." (Harnack, 2007, 1). This means that obesity is caused by eating more than one would need to in order to process and function through the day. The easy answer is to simply eat less, but as one can imagine it as simple as refusing food. However, there are many factors and underlining issues that contribute to this over-eating that reach beyond simple choices made in a cafeteria or restaurant. Some factors are genetic and are passed down from parent to child through genes and strands of DNA. It is true that some people are just genetically larger than others, but for the most part, that does translate directly into obesity. Other factors that affect the outcome of a person's health are due to social and psychological issues that can lead a person down the path of emotional over-eating. The vast amount of risk factors is a large reason why obesity is a continuing problem that cannot simply go away with will power. Obesity is a chronic disease which means it is long lasting and reoccurring. It is a disease that cannot be permanently cured, just maintained at a tolerable level in every single person. Millions of Americans are considered obese in today's society. There are many physical health problems that associate with being obese, and later affect the mind, in turn creating psychological problems. Obesity effects more than people singularly, but society as a whole. It was estimated that the annual cost to society for obesity was nearly $100 billion dollars. This is a large burden to a tight budget society in today's market.

The cause of obesity cannot be linked to a single item, but a multitude of factors. Physically it is caused by taking in an amount of energy high than output. This causes weight gain and in turn can cause a person to become obese. The Body Mass Index (BMI) is a uniform test that most professionals and doctors use to find a normal standardized measure of a person's overall weight and fat content. "The most scientific way to measure weight is to calculate the BMI. This is weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. A BMI of more than 25 is classed as overweight, higher than 30 is obese, and individual with a BMI over 40 is classified as extremely
or morbidly obese." (Davies, 2008, 19). When children and adults reach this higher BMI, many psychological factors begin to take hold of their personalities.

An even more alarming statistic about obesity is the growth in the percentage of children in America that are considered obese. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, between 16 and 33 percent of children and adolescents are obese in this country. Nearly a third of the children in this country has this chronic disease, yet, very little is being done to treat this epidemic compared to other diseases. Some common medical complications common with children facing obesity are hypertension, type 2 diabetes, respiratory ailments, orthopedic problems, sleep deprivation, and depression. An estimate of 80% of obese children continue to be obese into adulthood which, as stated before, make the implications of childhood obesity on the nation's health and health care costs huge. Therefore, experts are collaborating in order to try to find the leading causes of childhood obesity in this country in order to reverse its effect its had on society.

Experts have pointed to a range of important potential contributors to the rise in childhood obesity such as: a reduction of physical education and after-school athletic programs, an increase in the availability of sodas and snacks in public schools, the exponential growth in the number of fast food establishments throughout the country, society's trend towards "super-sizing" food portions, and the increasing number of highly processed high calorie and high fat grocery products. However, the most surprising and disquieting potential contributor to childhood obesity is children's use of media. The sudden dramatic increase in childhood obesity occurred during the same period of time when media started targeting children with TV shows and videos, video games, computer activities and Internet web sites. According to research done at Cambridge University, children today spend an average of five-and-a-half hours a day using media, the equivalent to a full time job, and more time than they spend doing anything else besides sleeping. (Roberts, 2004). Much of this media observed by children is overloaded with elaborate advertising campaigns, many of which promote foods such as candy and soda. It is estimated that the average child watches over 40,000 ads a year on a television alone. Children in today's society are being predisposed at a young age to become obese and depressed as an adult because of modern day media tactics.

Obesity does not only at times lead to depression and psychological issues in childhood and later on in adulthood, but can cause a plethora of other conditions. There are many social factors that can contribute to a person's self worth. The way people treat obese adults, and especially children, has a great amount to do with an individuals status n life and how they feel about themselves. A study was done on the link between peer victimization and obesity. This study examined the link between this peer victimization and the symptoms and ultimately cause of depression in both obese and non-obese children ranging from ten to sixteen years of age. The goal of the study was to see if there was a strong link between obesity and depression in these children, tracking them up to four years later in life to see if any long term effects were established. The results were staggering as victimization was a large factor in the development of depression in many of the children. In this case study, females particularly showed more of an inclination to become depressed due to victimization, mostly caused by being obese. It was then concluded that obesity and victimization has a link, and that link leads to a long road of depression and low self concept. (Adams, Bukowski, 2008, 860).
Apart from physical and psychological factors that affect an obese person personally, there are many factors that are beyond the person themselves. The image of a person that does not take care of themselves in not very acceptable in society. As unbiased a person may be, there are characteristics that people subconsciously see despite any predisposing that they may or may not have done about the obese. Studies have shown that multiple negative characteristics have been attributed to obese individuals such as they are lazy and lacking in willpower and even that they are incompetent, unclean and undisciplined. The way a person is perceived by his or her peers has a direct link to his or her success in life. This is a social problem that many people overlook, but contributes indirectly to the persons self worth. Success in life can make a person feel like they are accomplished, and therefore not complete. Without this success it is easy to fall in to depression and loath oneself. Simply put, a person cannot take care of his or her own body, then how could they be able to take care of anything else of importance, such as responsibility in a company, or promotion in a corporation. Regardless of which factor is the leading contributor to obesity, the reality is that obesity is an epidemic taking over the country and needs to be dealt with as soon as possible in order for the country to grow towards the right direction.


Obesity Statistics in America (MD)
America is the most obese country in the world. According to calorielab.com in the most recent study conducted by The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, America is in the lead with percentages as high as 36% of women and 32% of men being obese (1). The percentages are on a rise when compared by the years and are not a surprise, but the matter has not been solved. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) compares the obesity rates from 1985 to 2009. Rates were 10% to 14% or lower in less than half the states in America. Now those percentages have ascended as high as 25% to 29% or more in more than half the states (2). There are multiple factors that have help increase these percentages. Factors such as the increase of fast food restaurants, increase in technology, etc.

Around 20% of these obese citizens of America are children, who will eventually grow up to be obese adults and have children who are obese as well. Children are educated at school, but they also obtain a major lifestyle pattern from their parents or other family members. “Obese children and adolescents are more likely to become obese as adults. For example, one study found that approximately 80% of children who were overweight at aged 10–15 years were obese adults at age 25 years.” (3). Students do spend six hours of their day at school, but after those six hours they spend the other majority of the day with friends and family. Therefore children will learn how to live their lifestyle from their family. The example their parents set for the children is the
example they will become.


(2) [http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html)

(3) [http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html)

Factors that affect Obesity (MD)

**Technology and Media**

A majority of the reason why Americans are obese is due to increase progress in technology and media. The easy access of technology and media has helped children go from neighborhood parks and outdoor activities to their couches in their family rooms or their bedrooms. There is little or no physical activity carried out by children these days. Instead of playing outdoors with a friend for hours, children spend time playing video games. Parents would to be less worried about their children getting hurt outdoors than when they are in the family room, but not getting the physical activity is hurting their children in the long run. Due to video games, computers, phones, etc, the most exercise children are obtaining is for their thumbs and fingers. To access a computer more than 10 years ago children had to use one at school or at the public library, now there is at least one computer per household. “More than 40 studies have been conducted on the matter, and many indicate that the availability of technology contributes to a sedentary lifestyle and weight gain in children.” (1). Children are watching television, playing video games or using the computers in the majority of their spare time. Some parents have even gone the extent of installing a flat screen television in their children’s bedrooms. This gives children to access entertainment whenever they desire. They would be able to sit around and watch television shows whenever they want.

Even schools have helped children reach the level of sedentary lifestyle. Schools have started assigning more homework assignments, which are to be done online or at least typed up this allows student to spend more time on the computers. “The study found that children who spent 3 or more hours a day in front of technology had between a 17- and 44-percent increase of risk of being overweight, or a 10- to 61-percent increase risk in obesity.” (1). This has become the lifestyle of Americans, being lazy, sitting and surfing the Internet in their spare time.

To prevent these problems from increasing obesity there are certain limits that both the schools and parents need to enforce on children. Schools need to slow their progress on the technology enrichment. Children do need to learn how to use new technology but not abuse it. The enrichment should be done in computer courses or for projects in certain classes, but not for every assignment. Homework assignments should be handed in in school and not online, where it gives children the excuse to over use the computers at home. Parents should spend more time with their children (2). Parents may sit there with their children while they do their children do homework. Put a limit to the use of television, computers, and video games. Parents and children should do chores together so this way both the parents and children will be motivated. They both should motivate each other to do more physical activities. Both parents and their children can go on walks around the neighborhood and having more bonding time.
Fast Food Restaurants
Fast foods are unhealthy and high in sugars, fats, salt and most definitely high in calories. They are hazardous to health and it's been proven, yet there has been an increase in the number of fast food restaurants in the past thirty years (1). People eat at fast food restaurants due to lack of time and easy access. It is far easier to stop by a fast food restaurant and pick up a meal, which is cheaper than going to the grocery store, buying groceries, and preparing the meal at home. But what people do not realize is that it is much more healthier to take that time and cook a meal at home. There are less chances of getting a food borne illness or any other chronic diseases if meals are prepared and eaten at home.

“Every day, nearly one-third of U.S. children aged 4 to 19 eat fast food, which likely packs on about six extra pounds per child per year and increases the risk of obesity, a study of 6,212 youngsters found” (2). Fast food is one of the main factors to obesity and more seriously childhood obesity. Instead of eating homemade meals children are consuming restaurant food. Children are eating at fast food restaurants either due to lack of time, and possibly also because of lack of time with their parents. Instead of stopping their children from eating out, parents tell their children to eat out because they did not have time to cook a meal at home.

There are multiple benefits for eating at home rather than dining out. Meals cook at home are healthier than those same exact meals found in restaurants. They are less in sodium, fats, sugars, and calories. Meals which are prepared at home also have less chances of food borne illnesses. They are cooked with care and caution, where as meals at fast food restaurants are not. Foods found at fast food restaurants are mostly deep fried which not only caused obesity but also an increase in blood pressure and cholesterol.

Fast food restaurants do not only cause obesity but also other diseases which are related to obesity (3). Diseases such as:

a. Heart diseases
   the over consumption of fast foods increases LDL cholesterol and decreases HDL cholesterol tremendously
b. Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
   which cause female infertility and excessive hair growth and irregular menstrual cycles.

c. Type II Diabetes
   one of the most common diseases in America. In Type II Diabetes the pancreas is unable to convert sugar into energy, which is dangerous for the human body.
d. Dyslipidemia
   increase in triglycerides and LDL cholesterol which eventually turns into Heart Disease.

e. Sleep Apnea
   causes disruptive sleeping cycles and daytime fatigue. Not being able to breath properly while sleep and suddenly waking up at night.
f. Blount’s Disease
mostly occurs in children. It is when excessive amounts of weight is put on growing bones prevent them from growing properly.

g. Arthritis
the outcome of strain put on joints. Being obese or even over weight can put a great amount of strain on a person’s joints causing a serious amount of pain.

h. Respiratory Problems
obesity causes the lungs to work hard which may also result in asthma.

i. Stroke
which is caused by a blockage in the arteries. Having high cholesterol and blood pressure makes having a stroke even easier.

j. Liver Damage
fat does not evenly get distributed throughout the body. It accumulates around the liver causing inflammation, scarring and damage which is irreversible.

These are all the different types of other diseases which may occur along side with obesity. Fast food restaurants increase LDL cholesterol and blood pressure. They damage the lungs, arteries, liver and the heart and cause irreversible damage. It cause great amount of pain and suffering to the human body, yet people still continue to consume fast food due to lack of time and easy access. If the children of today are educated about the outcomes at a younger age they may learn to avoid fast food helping them live a better, healthier life.

(1) http://www.healthtree.com/articles/obesity/causes/fast-food/

(2) http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/01/05/health/main591325.shtml

(3) http://www.nutralegacy.com/blog/general-healthcare/top-10-dangerous-diseases-caused-by-fast-food-obesity/

Motivational Tools to Maintain and Exceed Diet and Exercise Goals (JR)
Changing one’s lifestyle choices can be an intimidating prospect to most people, and it can be both mentally and physically demoralizing to start a new diet and/or exercise routine. With over 45 million Americans going on diets each year, and expenditures in the range of $1 billion to $2 billion dollars annually on dietary programs and supplements, it is surprising that many of these individuals quit dieting so quickly after just beginning. In a recent study, it was found that people quit dieting reasons including: “I lost interest in my last diet faster than I lost weight”, "I felt trapped by my last diet, like I was never going to be able to enjoy food again", and "I started off great, but after a week I stopped losing weight even though I was faithful at sticking with my diet plan.” The same reasons are echoed by those who begin an exercise regimen, but then quit after a couple of weeks. People want immediate results and get discouraged if their goals are not met right away. Realistically, studies have shown that it can take up to 12 weeks for a diet and exercise regimen to have noticeable results on the physical appearance of the body, a time period that many Americans do not have the will or patience to last until. In order to ensure that more
Americans not only begin diet and exercise regimens, but that they continue them after the first couple of weeks, there have to be both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational tools that will help encourage those considering quitting.

Most individuals who visit the gym frequently have been dieting, exercising, or have been doing a combination of both, but rarely physically keep track of their progress from day to day. How can you know how far you have come, or how far you need to go if you do not keep a journal of your daily progress? It has been shown that those who track their exercise levels and dietary intake in weight loss and exercise journals lose more weight than those who do not. In a recent study, it was found that, “people who are successful at losing and maintaining their weight are good at self-monitoring, according to several studies. ‘And remember to put positive feelings in print, too, to review on days you need a boost,’ says Rachna D. Jain, Psy.D., a lifestyle coach and licensed psychologist in Columbia, Maryland.” The reason this is a more effective method is that it allows you to physically see your results, or lack of results due to slacking, over a period of time. Most individuals who frequent the gym do not record their results in a workout journal. With many different muscle groups being worked, and with many different exercises for each muscle, it becomes almost impossible to remember at which weight you ended an exercise during your last workout, or importantly, how many reps you were able to do at that specific weight. In order to make progress each week you need to be able to recall and build off last weeks progress, and a workout journal goes a long ways in helping you do this. This same technique can also be valuable when keeping track of your weekly dietary intake. Seeing exactly what you have eaten throughout the entire week can reinforce positive feelings of accomplishment as you meet your diet requirements, or it can inspire you to refocus for next week if you find you cheated once too often.

This tracking strategy is especially enforced in our service project as the children and parents are both encouraged to keep track of how much exercise they get, how much less television and Internet is used per day, and what foods they eat during the day. They do all this while also using a guideline of suggested activities that both parents and kids can engage in together instead of eating unhealthy or vegging on the couch. The motivational tool of physically writing down results from week to week will help both parents and children stay positive and motivated in their wellness program.


http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/01/03/health/main664519.shtml


Exercising and Dieting with a Partner (JR)
Many individuals feel alone and uncertain when deciding on the proper diet and exercise routine. With thousands upon thousands of diets and exercise routines being advertised all over the Internet, television, books, and magazines, it is hard to sift through those that are truly effective, and those that are created solely to generate profit without any real substance to them. Not only is difficult to separate the effective regimens from the ineffectual ones, but once you have actually decided on a plan, you are much more likely to quit if you are going it alone. A study at Indiana University, in Bloomington, found that “94 percent of people who worked out together stuck to their exercise plans, compared with only 57 percent of those who went at it alone.” It is much easier to skip a workout or stop by a fast-food restaurant alone than it is with another partner on the same routine as you are. You will also find that the time at the gym will pass much faster, working out will be much more enjoyable, and dieting will be much more manageable with a partner who is going through the same thing as you are.

Another benefit is that when you have an exercise partner who is counting on you, you will make it more of a habit, and you will be more accountable for your actions. You will be much more unlikely to skip a workout if you are supposed to meet your partner early in the morning at the gym, and when both of you agree to support and provide positive reinforcement for the other, you will both be more likely to develop the actual habit of working out. Dr. Belisa Vranich, a clinical psychologist and member of Gold's Gym's Fitness Institute claims that, “I believe strongly that you should make a point of going to the gym with a friend during the first few months of your gym membership. Working out should be a habit, and it takes 21 days to form a habit. If you're going it solo, you're likely to slack off during those three important introductory weeks, but if you're regularly meeting a friend, the habit is more likely to set in.”

Your workout partner can also motivate you to work harder and diversify your workout, leading to even better results, faster. If you are working out alone, you might not be motivated enough to push yourself as hard as you would with a partner. You might not push yourself to do those couple extra reps or run that extra mile. However, your partner will be able to recognize when you are slacking off or when you need a few extra words of encouragement to push through a tough set. This partnership can also lead to some friendly competition. While both of you are engaging in the same exercises, one might try to win the race, do more push-ups, or lift more weight on a machine. You can also add more exercises to your routine, exercises that can only be accomplished with a partner. This helps to surprise your muscles with different movements that lead to even better results.

The benefits from working out with a partner can clearly be transferred to the service project we are implementing. Both parents and children can act as each other’s partners as they motivate and make sure the other stays on task. According to a study previously mentioned by Sally White, Ph.D., dean and professor at the College of Education at Lehigh University, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, “the children of families who exercise together are more likely to be
active later in life." This means that not only does a parent have a strong influence on children now, but that their influence carries over into the child’s adulthood decisions. That is why our cooperative parent and child diet and exercise program will not only benefit the children of today and their decisions in the future, but will even affect how they raise their own children.


http://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-the-benefits-of-a-workout-partner.htm


http://www.weightlossforall.com/exercising-teams-x.htm

Benefits of Watching less Television (JR)
According to recent statistics, average Americans watch over 4 hours of television each day. This equates to 28 hours per week, 2 months per year, and in a 65 year life span, 9 years of it spent watching television. The problems with television addiction are evident and have been linked to the obesity epidemic that has recently spread across the nation. Imagine if we spent only half of this time watching television. How much more productive could we be if we simply reduced our viewing time and spent it outside, reading, or spending time with family? Our service project focuses on this aspect of American culture. Our comprehensive checklist gives parents and children suggestions for healthy activities that can be done instead of spending mindless hours in front of the television that improve both their dietary and physical needs. By just reducing the amount of television watched per day, one can radically increase productivity and live a much healthier and fruitful life.

http://www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html

http://www.wikihow.com/Quit-Watching-TV


The Service Project: Raise Awareness

Overview (MD)
Our service project mainly focuses on spreading awareness to students and their parents. We will be visiting Cheesequake Elementary School to spread awareness to the fifth grade students. We will try to educate them on the nutritional needs a person needs in order to live a healthy life. Give them a general overview of what a human body needs to live a healthy lifestyle. The rate of obesity is on the rise, therefore educating the younger generation about proper diets will benefit the future. Our goal is to motivate them into doing more physical activities and eating healthy. Also to encourage them to spend more time with their families than with materialistic things such as computers, television, and or video games.
We have made a spreadsheet to keep track of the foods they consume with the amount of calories in each meal. On the same spreadsheet the students will be asked to fill out the number of hours they spend watching TV, playing video games, and surfing the Internet on the computers. On that same spreadsheet we would like the children to fill out the number of ours they spend with their parents, whether if it is going grocery shopping with them or doing chores together.

Our main goal is to put an end to the sedentary lifestyle the children have right now. We would like to help plan out a better future by getting both the parents and their children involved in taking a part in this activity log. This activity log will last for three weeks. The first week the students are asked to do and take notes on what they have been doing in their daily lives. By the second week they will be asked to cut down on the hours spend on technology and adding more physical activities. By the third week we ask the students to have minimal use of the technology and fast foods, and replace those with maximal physical activities and healthier foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables and homemade meals.

Lesson plan for when we visit to Cheesequake Elementary School is to:

a. Overview on nutrients needed to have a healthy lifestyle
   i. Macro-nutrients
      1. Carbohydrates
      2. Proteins
      3. Fats
   ii. Other Micro-nutrients

b. The amount of both the macro and micro-nutrients needed per day.

. Benefits
i. Disadvantages

. Effects of malnutrition.

d. Diseases caused by either over or under consumption of certain foods.

e. Health risks in the long run.

f. Introduce the Activity Log

First Week Activity Log: (JR)
Both parents and children are encouraged to follow their normal routines during this week. Consume whatever foods they would normally eat and participate in as much physical activity as they normally would. Keep track of these statistics in this activity log each day. Estimate how many calories each meal contains if it is not explicitly listed. Be sure to include what types of physical activity you participated in, not just the lengths.

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Tip of the week: Compare your daily caloric intake and your daily exercise regimen to what is recommended for your specific age, height, and weight. In what areas do you meet the requirements of excel? Where could you improve?

**Second Week Activity Log (JR)**
Both parents and children are encouraged to analyze their results from week one and to attempt to correct any unhealthy eating habits, increase physical activity, and decrease watching television, playing video games, or surfing the Internet by one-half. However, if you are getting the correct amount of exercise and dietary requirements for your age, height, and weight, do not make any changes to your diet and exercise regimen, but do try to still cut down the amount of time spend on the various electronic entertainment sources listed above. Remember that participating in this together makes it both more enjoyable and much easier.

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Tips of the week: Have you been to your local park lately? You and your child should take a 30 minute walk around the park instead of watching those 30 minutes of television after dinner. Have you taught your child to cook? Cooking healthy meals together and can be both fun and informative for both parents and children.

**Third Week Activity Log (JR)**

Once again, both parents and children are encouraged to analyze their results from the previous weeks and should attempt to correct any unhealthy eating habits, increase physical activity, and decrease watching television, playing video games, or surfing the Internet to a minimum. By the end of this week, your healthy changes should become a habit, as it takes around twenty-one days to form a new habit. You should feel better and may even see physical changes. You are encouraged to continue to keep logging your results and participating in healthier living together, as it has been shown to be both easier, more effective, and achieves better overall results.

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Tips of the week: (MD)
Try to minimize the use of technology as much as possible. Try to cook meals together with the family. Increase the amounts of physical activities. Make the 30 min. walks a regular habit with the family. This way families can get more physical activity together, spent time together, and can have a stronger bond as well. Encourage each other to be healthy will help motivate the parent and the child. This will help build a healthier future.

Editorials

Editorial: Combating Childhood Obesity
By: Jonathan Reece

There has been little progress made concerning the obesity epidemic ever since it was brought to the media’s attention in the early 2000’s through documentaries like “Supersize Me,” and various other scientific studies. Regulating the food industry has been met with much opposition, and programs such as changing school lunches have had minimal real affects on the problem. Americans have continued to gain weight at an alarming rate, as we remain the most obese country in the world. Over 36% of women and 32% of men are obese, and chronic illnesses caused by obesity have been projected to outnumber tobacco related diseases for the top preventable cause of the death in the United States in a recent study by The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Not only is this epidemic affecting adults, but it is also plaguing children in this country, with nearly one third of children suffering from obesity. Adults who are obese are much more likely to have obese children, and in turn, around 80% of these children themselves grow up to be obese. This chronic illness directly leads to more serious diseases in children, such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, respiratory ailments, orthopedic problems, sleep deprivation, and depression (not to mention the overwhelming increased risk of heart disease during adulthood). These statistics are alarming and allude to a vicious cycle where obese children grow up to become obese adults, who then themselves raise obese children who follow this same pattern. But how can this cycle be broken? There must be a cooperative effort between both parents and children where both can keep track of, and motivate the other, as they both work towards a healthier lifestyle.

Studies have shown that is psychologically and physically exhausting to undergo major life changes. The reason that millions of Americans begin dieting and exercising and then quit after a week or so is because it can be extremely difficult to change one’s daily routine without immediate visible results. Realistically, studies have shown that it can take up to 12 weeks for a diet and exercise regimen to have noticeable results on the physical appearance of the body, a time period that many Americans do not have the will or patience to last until. However, there are a few motivational and effectual tools that anyone can use to help one stick to their diet. The first of these tools is exercising and dieting with a partner. In a recent study, it was shown that 94 percent of people who worked out together stuck to their exercise plans, compared with only 57 percent of those who went at it alone. Parents and children can participate in a healthier
lifestyle together, dieting and exercising together. Cook a healthy meal together or take a walk in the park with each other, instead of watching television and eating junk foods. Participating in these activities together can greatly improve the chances that the change in lifestyle will stick. The next motivational tool is a physical list or journal that allows people to keep track of exactly what they are eating, exactly how much exercise, and what exercises are being completed. In a recent study, it was found that people who are successful at losing and maintaining their weight are good at self-monitoring, and physically keep track of their progress. Parents and children can keep track of each other’s progress in something like a health journal, logging each day how much was eaten, what was eaten, and how much exercise was done. These small steps can help both parents and children work together to make difficult lifestyle changes that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

http://www.weightlossforall.com/exercising-teams-x.htm
Sent to the Princeton Packet Blog and to the editor
Email address: ftuccillo@centraljersey.com

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Healthy Family Living
By: Margi Dihora

To whom it may concern,

When we barely have time for ourselves how are we going to make time for our families. Health is a serious issue that we have concerns for but devote no time after it. Obesity is becoming a bigger concern day by day. There are multiple other health issues causes alongside obesity. That can only be changed if we change the way we live. It all depends on people’s habits. If we train ourselves to make time for our families and ourselves then of course we’ll have the time. This means taking time away from technology.

We are constantly surrounded by technology; cell phones, computers, television, etc. In order to make a difference we need to think old school a little more often. This mean spending more time with other humans instead of you’re phones, or laptops. This also means spending time with other family members.

Research shows that overweight adults are more likely to have overweight or even obese children who grow up to be overweight or obese and the cycle continues. To prevent this actions need to be taken by parents. Parents need to make time for family time. Both parents and children should go grocery shopping together. This way they both learn to shop according to each other’s likings. Also parents and children should do chores together, motivate each other; this is also promoting cleanliness and also adds some more physical activity in their lives.

Instead of getting fast foods both parents and their children should have more fun making
healthier foods at home. Families should also try eating more meals together. Spend more time outdoors, take walks together or go to the neighborhood park, and get fresh air rather than spending hours in front of the televisions or computers.

We all need to take care of ourselves. Eating healthy is a major key to living healthy. Our kids will learn how to live their lives the way we show them. If we aren’t the best example for them, most likely they won’t be for their kids. Therefore, we should try to live as much of a healthy life as possible. This does not mean becoming a health freak and not letting anyone else in your family enjoy different types of foods. It just means to eat as healthy as possible and to go out once in a while with the family and/or friends. We just need to put technology on time out and have more time for family and exercise with. After all “the greatest wealth is health” as said by Virgil

Sent to Families.com
Parenting. relations. community.

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**Obesity And The Choices We Make**

TO: Matthew Kosinski-Opinions Editor (Targum)

One of the growing concerns of contemporary America is the issue of obesity in our youth. Although there are always mitigating factors that are sometimes found in individual cases, such as thyroid problems, physical disabilities, and other underlying factors that have resulted in obesity, the majority of our youth seems to only suffer from poor diets and lack of physical exercise. Obesity leads to numerous issues that can one day lead to heart attacks, strokes, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and even certain forms of cancer. When taking a look at the issue with a short-term perspective, kids with obesity suffer from constant sweating, difficulties walking prolonged distances, difficulties running, short-breath, asthma symptoms, knee/lower back pain, and an increase in acne. Taking a further look at obesity we see other negatives aside from health, such as social stigmas, psychological damage, and lowered self-esteem. So with all these concerns that run concurrent with obesity, is their any medicinal cure for this ailment? What can our youth change to reduce obesity? The short answers are no and diet/exercise.

Obesity is not a disease that needs to be treated or alleviated with any form of medication for the greater majority of America’s youth. In fact obesity simply represents lifestyle choices that are perceived as normal, but actually very detrimental, this is where diet/exercise come in. On the diet side of things America’s youth appears to have an over reliance on processed foods that have high percentages of fat, simple carbohydrates, and sugars. Things of this nature need to be replaced with healthier alternatives such as low-fat yogurts lean meats, vegetables, fruits, and products that contain whole grains and fiber. Basically put down the coca puffs or fruit loops and pick up a box go-lean or total.

From the exercise side, video games, computers, facebook, twitter, and aim are not your friends. At least not in excess or to the point where you habitually choose to play Call of Duty rather then throw a football with your friends. Playing sports that contains short sprints such as basketball, football, soccer, and lacrosse are especially known for utilizing your glycogen stores, and burning calories even hours after such physical activity. In short, the union of diet and
exercise and its implementation into the lifestyles of American youth with ameliorate a large percentage of this problem and essentially kill obesity.

By: Steven Tran
Environmental Business Economics 2011