

# Canadian Kids Are Getting Fat!

Blunt but true.

The Canadian Institute of Health research states: "According to Statistic Canada's findings from the *Canadian Community Health Survey*, 26 percent of Canadian children and adolescents aged 2 to 17 were overweight or obese in 2004. Between 1978 and 2004 the obesity rate among 12-17 year olds increased from three percent to nine percent. "Childhood obesity has tripled over the past two decades," said Minister Dosanjh. "Obesity is a serious and complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach." Obesity is defined as being 30% over healthy bodyweight.

As parents it is our responsibility to take care of our children, body, mind and spirit. What can we do about it?

Obesity can result in low self esteem not to mention a multitude of diseases! The combination of low self esteem and inability to participate in activities with efficiency due to their weight opens them up to bullying.

Bullying and continued weight gain become a vicious circle, as stated by Corrie Sirota-Frankel MSW, a social worker who works with children and adolescence, I quote "We all know kids can be cruel. Bullying can be detrimental to a child's self esteem. They feel bad when taunted and teased, consequently they can turn to food for comfort then gain more weight which subjects them to more teasing"

We are seeing a generation of sedentary children who prefer to watch T.V., play video games and lie around listening to their iPods™.

It is time to take action and get our children active. When they participate in hockey, dance, soccer, etc... They not only learn about teamwork a very important life skill, they are active and burning calories.

When I was growing up we came home from school, played outside, rode our bikes and did not go home until dinner time. In the winter we were always outside in the snow, sledding, skiing or building snow forts and snowmen. Today's kids find it cold outside and prefer to stay inside where it is warm, not getting fresh air for most of the winter months.

The fast foods that are so easily accessible are also a culprit of our overweight society. Everything is "supersized" and that results in hundreds of unnecessary calories. All of the nitrates, sodium and fat that these foods contain are poison to our kids. They are designed to create an addiction so that the body craves more of these foods.

Most of the boxed foods in the supermarket also contain ingredients that make our body want more of the same. Foods high in fructose (fast foods contain fructose ), hydrogenated palm kernel oil to name a few are additives that the body does not properly metabolize.

We love our children. We have busy lives, often both parents work, the children are home alone and left to their own devices.

It is never too late. Make sure to keep healthy snacks (homemade preferably) in the house so that the kids have appropriate choices. Fruits, cut up veggies and dip, whole grain breads are great snack choices.

Be sure they get at least 3-4 hours a week of activity not including school gym programs. You can get involved by taking walks after dinner, going on family bike rides or hikes on the weekends.

The City of Pointe Claire offers Kidnetic. Its' goal is to introduce different activities to inactive youth in hopes of triggering an interest in developing an active lifestyle. Contact Tim Miller at 514 630 1214 for details.

Given that we are role models it is important to remember that they are looking at us for guidance, therefore it is not enough to "talk the talk" we have to "walk the walk" (literally and figuratively).

So get out there, have fun with your kids, let them cook with you, show them how to eat properly and make healthy choices. We owe it to our kids!

Phyllis Frost / FIT BODY BY PHYL