



NUTRITION

TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Obesity in general, and childhood obesity in particular, is becoming more and more of an international health concern. With rising rates of type 2 diabetes and other obesity related disorders, the need to address it is increasing.

Health concerns in childhood obesity

Childhood obesity carries risks and concerns that are unique to children. From toddlers to adolescents, there is a general increase in the number of children whose body mass index (BMI) is dangerously high.

Couple this with increasingly sedentary lifestyles and the health concerns of overweight and obese children can be life threatening.

Conditions like high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes have a significant impact on the future life of an overweight child and can seriously affect their health as they grow into adulthood.

It's important to tailor a weight loss lifestyle and change of habits to your child's needs.

Here are some of the changes you can start making today.

- Encourage children to be active by buying them gifts like skateboards, bicycles and balls.
- Take part in physical activity as a family to encourage enjoyable exercise. Take a walk together, play ball sports together, or encourage the child to try out for a school sports team.
- Eliminate fatty cuts of meat and replace with skinless chicken and fish.
- Provide healthy snacks like dried fruit, nuts, cracker bread, and low GI wholewheat toast with peanut butter (with no added salt or sugar).
- Ensure that they eat at least five portions of vegetables, 1-2 servings of whole fruit a day.
- Reduce starchy, fried vegetables like potato chips and wedges.
- Eliminate fast food from their diet and replace it with vegetables, wholegrains, and lean proteins.
- Add herbs and spices to flavour their food and to expand their palate.
- Reduce or eliminate sugary drinks from the child's diet. Replace fruit juice and cool drinks (fizzy drinks) with water or sugar-free herbal teas (not iced tea).