



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2-14-14
Mid-Michigan District Health Department
615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702
www.mmdhd.org
SUBMITTED BY/MEDIA CONTACT: Leslie Kinnee
989-831-3669, kinnee@mmdhd.org



Childhood obesity on the rise-break the cycle

Stanton- OK, so it's no surprise that children and adolescents tend to favor fast food, spend hours playing video games, and often have to be forced outside in an attempt to engage them in some form of physical activity.

But what may come as a surprise is that since 1980, obesity among children and adolescents has more than tripled, and nearly one in three children are now considered overweight or obese.

Sadly, these new trends may have life-long consequences. Overweight and obese youth are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. They are also at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems as well. Furthermore, obesity in youth often continues into adulthood, putting them more at risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and more.

So what can be done to break or reverse the cycle?

Balance Calories

Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating, can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases. Mothers can start their children off right by eating well during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Other ways to help children develop healthy eating habits include:

- Provide plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Choose low-fat or non-fat dairy products
- Choose lean meats, beans, poultry and fish
- Serve low-fat and low-sugar treats, such as fruit, vegetables, yogurt, etc.
- Serve reasonably-sized portions
- Encourage children to drink lots of water
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages
- Limit consumption of sugar and saturated fat
- Avoid watching television while eating. Instead, eat together at the dinner table
- Avoid forcing your child to eat if not hungry
- Limit the frequency of fast-food

-more-

2~ Childhood obesity/physical fitness

Help kids stay active

Making sure your child receives an adequate amount of physical exercise is a critical step in combating childhood obesity. Children should get 60 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity each day, but studies show that the average child and adolescent in America gets less than 15 minutes of vigorous activity a day.

When it comes to physical activity, remember that children imitate adults. Start adding physical activity to your own daily routine and encourage your child to join you. In addition to being fun, regular activity has many other health benefits, including strengthening bones, decreasing blood pressure, reducing stress and anxiety, increasing self-esteem, and helping with weight management.

Reduce sedentary time

Don't forget to limit the amount of time your kids watch television, play video games or surf the web to no more than two hours per day.

Helping your children balance calories, encouraging them to stay active, and ensuring that they reduce and limit sedentary time will not only stop or reverse the cycle of obesity, but will also put them on the road to a healthy lifestyle.

For more information and tools regarding healthy eating habits, visit www.choosemyplate.gov, or www.letsmove.gov, a program developed by First Lady Michelle Obama to solve the childhood obesity epidemic.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

###