

Currently in the US, 15% of children and adolescents from 6-19 years of age are overweight. That equates to 9 million children in the United States. These are alarming statistics that should raise concern among all Americans.

We know that most often the cause of obesity is poor eating habits and limited physical activity. Some of the health consequences of childhood obesity include: type II diabetes, gallbladder disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, depression, and low self esteem.

I would like to share with you my recommendation for a life-style modification program for parents seeking to address obesity or overweight issues with their children.

Before starting any exercise or diet program you should consult with your Pediatrician to rule out serious health conditions such as: thyroid disease, heart disease, or high blood pressure.

First two weeks – Have your child maintain a diet log recording the time and type of food consumed.

Second two weeks - Continue the diet log, but encourage three meals a day. At this point you should encourage the child to select a physical activity that he/she is interested in such as swimming, dance, tennis, basketball etc.

Third two weeks suggest healthier substitutes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Fourth two weeks- try reducing serving sizes as well as encourage your child to slow down and enjoy his/her food.

If your child is able to stay the course, he/she should see a significant improvement in weight and self-esteem. If not, you and your child may want to join a non-profit support group such as MDTLC.

MDTLC (MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TEACHING LIFESYLE CHANGES) provides ongoing counseling and support by encouraging mothers and daughters to meet weekly and engage in some form of physical activity such as walking, cycling, bowling, skating, etc. For more information regarding this support group contact Dr. Toni Thompson-Chittams at 301-352-6515 or tlcpediatrics@comcast.net.

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