

# Facts about children and obesity

Obesity is a relatively unknown disease and there are many misconceptions. For a child with obesity, it is extremely important that both their parents and other adults, such as relatives, family friends and school staff, are aware of the disease. This brochure provides facts about the disease and how it is treated.





## 10 things that every adult needs to know about children and obesity

- 1 Obesity is a disease and **has nothing to do with how a person looks.**
- 2 Obesity affects all organs of the body and can cause health problems and serious **secondary complications** later in life.
- 3 Obesity is caused by **a combination of genetics and environment.** Some people have genes that make it harder to recognise when they are full and easier to store fat.
- 4 Obesity **can be treated.** The first line of attack is to make lifestyle changes that the body responds well to. The earlier treatment is started, the better.
- 5 **Food is the most important tool.** Most people with obesity do not eat more unhealthily than others, but they do eat more, and more often.
- 6 Physical activity is another important tool in treatment. **It is a health-promoting factor** – the negative impact on the body is reduced if the body is active.
- 7 **Sleep** is a third tool. Children who get enough hours of sleep every night are less likely to crave sweets.
- 8 As with many other diseases, obesity is a struggle. To cope, the child, and indeed the whole family, needs lots of **encouragement, support and love.**
- 9 The disease is **only one aspect of the child's health.** Caring about how the child feels about other things and what the child thinks about and is interested in gives that child a sense of security and self-esteem.
- 10 The more **adults who support,** encourage and show lots of love to the child, the easier the treatment will go. This reduces the pressure on the family, and helps them make the treatment just a small part of everyday life.

[Watch the video:](#)



# Cause and treatment

A child with obesity is helped by a team of specialists. In the video, a paediatrician explains why it is important to know if a child is obese, what causes obesity and how it is treated.



[Watch the video:](#)



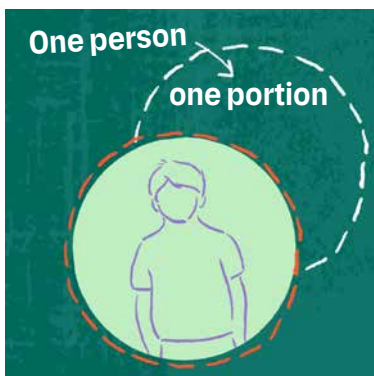
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## Food and drink

About 80 per cent of our weight is influenced by what we eat and drink. This makes diet one of the most important tools for treating the disease obesity.

### Eating the right amount of food

Many obese children are enthusiastic eaters. Often, the problem is not that they eat unhealthy food, but that they eat too much food. Even healthy food can lead to overweight if eaten in excess. An important tool in the treatment of obesity is therefore helping the child to eat the right amount of food.



### One person – one portion

- Try to serve only one portion of food at mealtimes.
- No second or third helpings of food.
- If the child still feels hungry after the meal, offer more vegetables.

# Physical activity

An important element in the treatment of obesity is physical activity. To some extent, this is because exercise can help to reduce weight. But more than anything, it is because movement triggers beneficial processes in the body's organs. The risk of other serious diseases, which obesity could lead to, decreases if the child is physically active regularly. **In other words, physical activity is a health-promoting factor!**

It is good to remember that physical activity does not have to be a sport. Increasing ordinary movement, such as playing on a playground, walking, cycling and vacuuming, also counts.

**TIP!** 60 minutes of everyday movement

Walk to school 15 mins.

Walk home from school 15 mins.

Vacuum 10 mins.

Play with the neighbour's dog 10 mins. voff!

Ride a kickbike to and from the shop 10 mins.

60 minutes of everyday movement can be accumulated in several different ways. For example: walk to school (15 minutes), walk home from school (15 minutes), play with the neighbour's dog (10 minutes), vacuum (10 minutes), and ride a kickbike to and from the shop to pick up a parcel (10 minutes).