

World Children's Day



World Children's Day takes place on the 20th November each year. On this day in 1959, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. On the same day in 1989, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The theme of World Children's Day

Each year, the UN provides a particular theme for World Children's Day to promote awareness of child issues, foster a sense of togetherness and improve child welfare. The theme of World Children's Day 2021 is:

"Investing in our future means investing in our children"

International Children's Rights

Every year, we are inspired to influence, promote, and celebrate children's rights, which encourage dialogues and actions towards providing a better life for children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion, or abilities. It consists of **54 articles** that set out children's rights and how governments should work together to make them available to all children. This includes the right to the following:

- Life, survival, and personal development
- Protection from violence, abuse, and neglect
- An education that enables children to fulfil their potential
- Be raised by, or have a relationship with, their parents
- Express their opinions and be listened to



Childhood obesity

Childhood obesity is a condition where excess body fat negatively affects a child's health or well-being. Body Mass Index (BMI) uses height and weight measurements to estimate an individual's body fat.

On the standard BMI chart, kids aged between 2 to 18 fall into one of four categories:

- **Underweight:** BMI below the 5th percentile
- **Normal weight:** BMI between the 5th and the 85th percentile
- **Overweight:** BMI at the 85th to the 95th percentiles
- **Obese:** BMI at or above 95th percentile



Causes and risk factors of obesity in children

Lifestyle is a leading factor in childhood obesity. Lack of physical activity, excess calorie intake and genetics all play major roles in childhood obesity.

Obesity is caused by a combination of a variety of factors:

- **Diet:** Regularly eating high-calorie foods, such as fast foods, candy, sugary drinks and desserts can cause the child to gain weight.
- **Lack of exercise:** Too little exercise, and too much time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television or playing video games, will cause children to gain weight because they don't burn enough calories.
- **Family factors:** A child who comes from an overweight family may be more likely to be overweight too. This is especially true if high-calorie foods are always available and physical activity is not encouraged.
- **Psychological factors:** Stressful events in the child's life such as personal, parental, and familial stress, may increase their risk of being obese as many children overeat to deal with their problems or feelings, including stress and boredom. Their parents may also have similar habits.

Childhood obesity complications

Childhood obesity can have negative consequences on a child's health, social life, and mental well-being. Children who are obese are more likely to have:

- High blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- Fatty liver disease, gallstones, and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
- Increased risk of impaired glucose tolerance, and type 2 diabetes
- Breathing problems, such as asthma and sleep apnea
- Joint problems and musculoskeletal discomfort

Childhood obesity is also related to:

- Psychological problems such as anxiety and depression
- Low self-esteem and lower self-reported quality of life
- Social problems such as bullying and stigma



How to prevent children from becoming overweight or obese

To help prevent excess weight gain in children, try to:

- Be a good role model. Consume healthy foods and drinks and choose active pastimes. Children are good learners, and they often copy what they see.
- Avoid using food as a punishment or as a reward. When managing your children's behaviour, select incentives, rewards and consequences that do not involve food.
- Involve the whole family in building healthy eating, drinking and physical activity habits.
- Get active as a family. Plan for fun family time that involves plenty of activity and movement.
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep according to their age, generally 13-9 hours.
- Plan for healthy snacks ahead and promote portion control.