

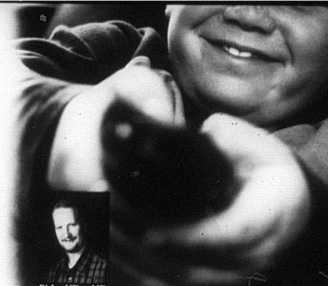
Health

www.BourbonHospital.com



BOURBON
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
Bourbon Community Hospital
11110 E. Dixie
Paris, KY 40362

Healthcare is provided by a licensed physician. It is not intended to diagnose or treat any disease. It is not intended to replace the advice of a physician. It is not intended to be used for any purpose other than that intended by the author. For more information about Bourbon Community Hospital, please contact the physician. © 2008 Bourbon Community Hospital. All rights reserved.



Richard West, MD
Internal Medicine

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

THERE IS A REASON FOR ALL TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ARISE IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY. THEY REPRESENT OUR FUTURE.

Childhood obesity has become a significant health problem in our nation over the last thirty years, with rates tripling up to nearly 20% of children in certain age categories. Optimal weight is determined by a measurement known as BMI (*Body Mass Index*) which is a calculated weight to height ratio with published normal ranges. Normal weight reflects a BMI between the 5th and 85th percentiles, with "overweight" represented between the 85th and 95th percentiles, and "obesity" exceeding the 95th percentile of BMI.

Studies have pinpointed numerous causes of obesity that represent changes in the average American lifestyle over the last several decades, typically more so in certain regions of the U.S., including Kentucky. These include poor dietary habits with excessive intake of sweetened beverages (*fruit juices, soft drinks, etc.*), eating large portions of high calorie foods while consuming small amounts of fruits and vegetables, and skipping breakfast. Behavioral contributors to obesity include sedentary lifestyles with little aerobic exercise and excessive screen time (*television, computers, video games*).

There is a reason for all to be concerned about the alarming rise in childhood obesity due to the serious adverse health effects on these children who represent our future. Compared to normal weight children, those with obesity have higher rates of diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, liver disease, gallstones, sleep apnea, various orthopedic complications (*top problems: bowing of the legs, etc.*) and

for girls, higher rates of polycystic ovary syndrome also have higher rates of mental health problems (e.g., anxiety, and poor self-esteem). Unfortunately, obese children are likely to become obese adults with higher rates of stroke. Usually, those who are obese or overweight have a shortened life expectancy versus normal weight.

Early prevention, or at least active addressal of obesity is optimal. This can be successfully accomplished by following simple guidelines including: limiting the intake of sugar to one a day, consuming at least four to five servings of vegetables each day, eating a healthy breakfast daily, limiting screen time to 1 to 2 hours daily, and taking breaks at least every minute. For those with obesity, a physician is also recommended to screen for diabetes, and liver disease. Severe cases may be referred to centers which specialize in the treatment of childhood obesity.

Childhood obesity is now a serious health problem, necessitating parents and physicians to aggressively address it during childhood before it becomes a more serious problem. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children see a physician for regular scheduled well child visits to include screening for childhood obesity (month of