Performance Therapeutics
Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine

THINK

THERAPY

FIRST!

Performance Therapeutics
Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine

Offers free screenings and 9 convenient locations in McAllen, Mission, Edinburg, Weslaco, Elsa, Rio Grande City, Roma, Eagle Pass, Del Rio

Performance Therapeutics has a physical therapist at each location, ready to see you when you need help. Same-day appointments are available and walk-ins are welcome.

We offer free transportation if you need a ride, and we accept most insurances, including Medicare, Medicaid, and Chips.

Childhood Obesity: Are Our Children Getting Too Obese?

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This is one problem that hits close to home. In May 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama of the United States was in full swing with her campaign against childhood obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and reports from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the prevalence of overweight children between 6-19 years of age is between 17-18 percentile in the United States. This is a disturbing global trend; the number of obese children has tripled over the past four decades across the world.

Why is childhood obesity a problem? There are several medical issues directly associated to obesity:

1) Hypertension
2) Diabetes
3) Respiratory disease
4) Increased risk of injury

After a child turns 6, the chances that obesity will persist into adulthood increase by 50%. The sooner obesity is treated, the greater the likelihood that the individual can achieve a normal adult weight.

Is Your Child At Risk?

- Here are the known risk factors:
- Season (winter), population density (large urban areas) are associated with higher childhood and adolescent obesity.

- Both parents happen to be obese (body frame tends to be inherited).
- Levels of parental education and socioeconomic class.
- Dietary fat intake.
- Time spent watching television. The average American child watches approximately 25 hours of television per week.
- Diet: High-fat diets, irregular meals and inactivity continue to be primary contributors to obesity. Limit/avoid the "empty calories" like sodas, candy and chips.
- Inactivity: Inactivity is widely recognized as a contributor to obesity. Children aged 6 to 11 years watch 23.5 hours of TV per week and adolescents ages 12 to 17 years watch about 22 hours. A study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition assessed the effects of reducing television watching and video game-playing in obese 3rd and 4th grade students. The results showed that the body fat level of the children who received the intervention for 6 months dropped significantly compared to the controls.• Children, like adults, can eat in response to moods. Emotions that commonly lead to overeating include sadness, loneliness, anger and celebration. Children can learn to identify their feelings before eating and control the "misinterpreted" urges to eat.
- Obese children report greater number of life changes (indicative of stress) compared with other adolescents. Depression, anxiety, social and behavior problems are commonly reported by obese children.

Exercise As The Solution

- A physical therapist can determine realistic weight loss or maintenance goals and help the child accept his / her natural body frame. Otherwise, he/she will constantly strive for an unrealistic weight, often leading to restrictive dieting, overeating or binging. Weight loss of one-half to 1 pound per week is realistic. If a child you know needs help, seek the services of a physical therapist, who can set goals that are small and attainable so that the child doesn't feel discouraged.
- Encourage daily activity in obese children. Sports participation contributes to improved fitness levels, specifically increased endurance, strength, self-esteem, energy and often, improved mood. Family involvement is crucial.
- A physical therapist can identify what (if any) changes family members must make to improve the health and fitness level of everyone in the family—not just the obese member. The parents must become good role models with their eating, exercise and stress management. Strive for an attitude of "we're going to do this together."

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