
The Washington Post Announces Special Series "Young Lives at Risk: Our Overweight Children"

Five-Part Series Examines Widespread Trend, Risks Associated With Overweight Children, Offers Potential Solutions

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The Washington Post and washingtonpost.com introduce an in-depth, five-part series on overweight children, a problem affecting the lives of millions of American children. The series examines the toll on individual children and identifies contributing factors including family, economic status, and lax public health policy.

"Childhood obesity puts virtually every major organ in the body at risk and appears to be alarmingly more destructive to a child's well-being than it is to an adult's well-being," said Lynn Medford, Metropolitan Editor, The Washington Post. "This series explores the epidemic from every angle, looking at the possible causes and potential solutions. It addresses the need for government response and offers suggestions to families who want to improve their health."

The childhood obesity series began Sunday, May 18 with an overview of the epidemic from Susan Levine and Rob Stein. Lean Plate Club columnist Sally Squires tests readers' "Nutrition IQ."

--On Monday, May 19: Is government doing enough to combat childhood obesity? Staff writers Lori Aratani and Susan Levine talk to critics who say the federal response has been inadequate and uncoordinated. Staff writer Kendra Marr explains why vending machines don't offer healthier snacks.

--Tuesday, May 20: Can neighborhoods make kids fat? Staff writers Hamil Harris and Steve Hendrix take a look at District wards in which over half the children are overweight, and Annie Gowen focuses on the significant weight problems that suburban communities are confronting among children. Health writer Sandra Boodman visits a controversial "fat school."

--Wednesday, May 21: Are parents the barrier to healthy lunches? Staff writer Lori Aratani examines this issue from a school setting, and Education Reporter Valerie Strauss follows the latest trend in physical education. The Food section tells parents how to pack healthy lunches and explores possibilities for improved home economics classes.

--Thursday, May 22: Staff writer Brigid Schulte reveals that the medical community is baffled over how to prevent children from becoming overweight and staff writers Susan Levine and Lori Aratani look at the food industry's response to the obesity epidemic and what more can be done.

Families can also access important information on how to improve their health and diet. Online features, such as nutrition quizzes and an anatomical graphic, help readers learn about the dangers of poor nutrition and inadequate physical activity. Tools also include an interactive grocery store, which features 16 product groups and nutritional comparisons, to demonstrate how careful shopping can lower the amount of unhealthy ingredients. Videos, audio slideshows and photos show the struggle of children who confront obesity and the parents who suffer with them. "KidsPost" will provide appropriate, complementary coverage for younger readers.

The series can be found at www.washingtonpost.com/obesity.

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