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## Childhood obesity and metabolic syndrome in India

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Childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in developed as well as in developing countries. Overweight and obesity in childhood are known to have significant impact on both physical and psychological health. Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop non-communicable diseases like pre-diabetes, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, non alcoholic fatty liver disease, obstructive sleep apnea and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age. Developing countries like India have a unique problem of 'double burden' wherein at one end of the spectrum we have obesity in children and adolescents while at the other end we have malnutrition and underweight. Globally, the prevalence of childhood obesity has risen in recent years. Previous studies indicated that 200 million children are either overweight or obese. There is lack of national representative data on obesity in children from India with its widely varying geographical, social and cultural norms. The mechanism of overweight and obesity development is not fully understood and it is believed to be a disorder with multiple causes. Environmental factors, sedentary lifestyle, bad dietary habits and cultural environment play significant roles in the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity worldwide. In general, overweight and obesity are assumed to be the results of an increase in caloric and fat intake. On the other hand, there are supporting evidence that excessive sugar intake by soft drink, genetic, increased portion size and steady decline in physical activity have been playing major roles in the rising rates of overweight and obesity all around the world.

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