
WHO Analysis: Alarming Rates of Overweight Children



According to a new report published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, being overweight is so common that it risks becoming a new norm in the WHO European Region. For example, up to 27% of 13-year-olds and 33% of 11-year olds are overweight.

“Our perception of what is normal has shifted; being overweight is now more common than unusual. We must not let another generation grow up with obesity as the new norm,” said the WHO Regional Director for Europe, Zsuzsanna Jakab. “Physical inactivity – coupled with a culture that promotes cheap, convenient foods high in fats, salt and sugars – is deadly.”

Some countries have managed to contain the epidemic; France and some Scandinavian countries at least keep it at a stable level. These countries have implemented policies through a whole-of-government approach and intersectoral initiatives in line with Health 2020, the WHO policy framework for health. The palette of actions includes the promotion of vegetable and fruit consumption in school, along with school lunch initiatives, taxes on foods to reduce intake, tighter controls of advertising, sound systems for surveillance and monitoring, and action to promote physical activity, especially among children.

WHO recommends the following action at different levels, **National governments** can enforce legislation and insist on informative labelling, nutrient profiling and regulated marketing of food products, requiring the food industry to take responsibility. **Local governments** can make healthy foods available, and insist on town planning and infrastructure that encourage healthy lifestyles and make the healthy choices easy choices. At the **individual** level, consumers can be empowered to make informed choices through having access to adequate information.

To read more, please click [here](#) [1].

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