

10 Things to Know about Texas Obesity

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Obesity can be solved. That was the message when the Partnership for a Healthy Texas unveiled. Their mission is to develop and promote policies that prevent and reduce obesity in Texas. Another message within their agenda was that, to solve obesity, the #1 order of business is addressing overweight in children. Partners work together to promote initiatives to prevent obesity.



The following ten reasons answer why this is such an important issue for children and Texas. (Highlighted text takes you to the information source.)

1. Experts say the health we take into adulthood gets determined, mostly by our health and environment during childhood. No surprise then: **70 percent of overweight children grow up to be overweight or obese.**
2. Communities with environments where good nutrition and fitness are made don't just have children who are healthier. **Children in healthy environments get better test scores, miss school less often, complete their education, and get into trouble less.**
3. Texas still has a long way to go before we can call it an environment healthy for children. **Our state has the nation's seventh highest rate of child obesity—and the highest rate of obesity among girls.**
4. Even at the very start of life, we need to do more to prevent obesity. Consider that for low-income 2-5-year-olds served by state feeding programs, **16% of these Texan preschoolers are either overweight or obese.**
5. **Obesity ranks as the public's top health concern for children** in the United States, ahead of drugs, alcohol, and abuse.
6. Obesity is a costly problem for states like Texas. **Type II Diabetes, an obesity-related illness, accounts for nearly a tenth of all spending by Texas Medicaid.** That spending is projected to more than double by the year 2030, reaching \$1.5 billion per year.
7. Projections also look bad for the Texas economy. More obesity leads to lower productivity due to more illnesses, yet current projections say **nearly half of working-age Texans—43 percent—will be obese** within three decades.
8. Businesses will pay a heavy price for this, according to The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. **The projected cost of the obesity epidemic to Texas businesses will reach \$15.8 billion by 2025 (up from \$3.3 billion today).**
9. Obesity is linked to many chronic diseases that shorten the life span and drive up health care costs, from high blood pressure to heart disease. **Obesity will soon surpass smoking as the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.**
10. Demographers now forecast that, should obesity remain on its current trajectory, **today's children will be the first generation in centuries to live shorter lives than their parents.**

Simple changes in public policy, like the ones recommended by the Partnership, would go a long way toward creating a healthier Texas. They would make it easier for more families and kids to get healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, help schools foster healthy environments, ensure new streets and roads make it easier to walk and bicycle, and encourage child care settings to get children off to a healthy start. Please consider speaking out for Texas to meet this challenge head-on in 2011.

Ref: <http://txchildren.org/state-of-the-children/10-things-to-know-about-texas-obesity-and-other-news-of-the-week>