

Driving health and wellness from early on



Research shows that **80%** of adolescents around the world are not physically active enough.¹

Children are considered overweight when they are well above the normal or healthy weight for their age and height. This can be a result of a lack of physical activity, certain behaviours – such as too much screen time, or even genetics.² Overweight children are more at risk of severe illnesses in adulthood, which makes it especially important for them to be healthy and well from a young age.

What is childhood obesity?



What can be done to help?



1

Encourage healthy eating habits:³

- › Vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products should be plentiful, as well as low-fat or non-fat dairy products, such as cheese and yoghurt.
- › Make sure that children drink more water and limit the consumption of saturated fats and sugary treats and drinks.

- › It's recommended that children aged 6 to 17 years do at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.
- › For growth and development, children aged 3 to 5 years should be physically active throughout the day.

Physical activity is key:²

2



3

Don't underestimate the importance of sleep:

Too little sleep is associated with obesity. Partly because a lack of sleep may lead to additional snacking and less physical activity. A child's sleep requirements differ based on their age:⁴

4 to 12 months:	12 to 16 hours including naps
1 to 2 years:	11 to 14 hours including naps
3 to 5 years:	10 to 13 hours including naps
6 to 12 years:	9 to 12 hours
13 to 18 years:	8 to 10 hours

Remember: Regardless of their weight, no child should be placed on a diet without consulting a healthcare provider first.⁴



Are you working on your Whole Health? Why not visit our [Whole Health Calendar](#) page for a range of helpful articles ranging from exercising to nutrition and managing chronic conditions. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your HR department or Cigna customer service.

This article was reviewed by Isabel Cuevas, Medical Advisor, TH&N – Integrated Health Team, Cigna.

Sources:

1. Physical Activity. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>. Updated 26 November 2020. Accessed 7 December 2021.
2. Childhood Obesity Causes & Consequences. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/causes.html>. Accessed 7 December 2021.
3. Tips to Help Children Maintain a Healthy Weight. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html>. Accessed 7 December 2021.
4. How much sleep do children need? NHS. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-much-sleep-do-kids-need/>. Accessed 7 December 2021.