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Ostracized overweight kids eat more

By **Nanci Hellmich**, USA TODAY

Updated 1d 4h ago

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When overweight children feel left out or ostracized, they tend to eat more and exercise less, new research shows.

The findings come at a time when about one-third of children are overweight or obese, which increases their risk for type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, sleep apnea and other health problems.

Scientists at the University of Buffalo have been studying the effects of different situations on kids' food intake and activity levels for several years.

In one new study, they had 40 normal-weight and overweight children play a computer game that replicates ball-tossing.

Under one condition, the children's video characters were excluded or ostracized during the game; and under another, the same children's video characters were included in the game. After playing the computer game under both conditions, the children had a chance to eat as much as they wanted for about 15 minutes.

The findings:

- The overweight kids consumed 200 calories more when their video character was excluded from the game than when the character was included.
- The normal-weight children didn't eat more when their video characters were ostracized.

One possible reason is that overweight kids seek food for comfort after they feel ignored, says lead researcher Sarah-Jeanne Salvy, an assistant professor of pediatrics. She is presenting her research Friday at a meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development in Montreal.

In a similar experiment, 20 normal-weight and overweight children played the same

By Photodisc

Overweight kids seek food for comfort after they feel ignored, researchers said.

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included, and then they were given a chance to be physically active. The kids wore accelerometers to measure their activity levels.

Findings: Overweight and normal-weight kids alike were less physically active after their video characters were excluded from the games.

It may be that the children were so focused on dealing with the pain of the ostracism that they stop being as active, Salvy says.

She says the take-home message for parents is to help their children find ways other than eating to deal with rejection and peer adversity: "Kids may need to talk about their feelings and seek comfort in other activities."



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 [The Mick](#) Score: 3

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Being "ostracized" because of weight by kids today has to mean a LOT of weight because overweight is already typical.

When I retired from teaching in 2006, our Homecoming Queen was so overweight she would have had trouble getting a date to the Homecoming Dance, let alone be elected queen, when I was in high school in the 60's or even in the 80's.

So I wonder if being ostracized for being overweight is due to something else -perhaps not being able to do physical things because of weight and lack of skills or fitness: perhaps because mom and dad decided the kid should become a soccer, basketball, etc. player and the kid was so out of shape and slow that THAT, not strictly the weight, caused the ostracization.

**High Times**

Score: 17

11:45 AM on March 31, 2011

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Parents have lost touch with reality when it comes to feeding their kids.

Stock the house with nutritious foods and you won't have this problem.

Stock it with ice cream, potato chips, and cookies and you end up with fat kids.

It really is that easy.

**Centrist**

Score: 27

11:48 AM on March 31, 2011

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This subject is about "kids".

Make no mistake - many irresponsible parents have contributed towards this.

btw: When I was a kid. whenever we fell. we got back up.

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Adopting a victim mentality was NOT an option - regardless of color or class.



shelby329

Score: 14

11:51 AM on March 31, 2011

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OMG, and they needed a study to find this out???? Talk about a waste of money!!!!



NotBrainwashed

Score: 14

11:52 AM on March 31, 2011

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Kids and their parents need to be made uncomfortable about their weight. Otherwise they will never lose any. Words like "wide-boned", "large", and "it's not my fault, it's genetics" should be forbidden from the vocabulary. The word these people need to hear is FAT. This playing nice does more harm than good.

1 reply



big sam

Score: 11

11:57 AM on March 31, 2011

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My family was the worst eaters in the world. Ice cream every night, cokes every day along with candy bars. We would eat pepperoni and home made pizza covered in cheese. When I got married at 20, I weighted 145# @ 5' 8". One thing we did, was go outside and play, everyday all day. No one I knew was over weight. Just the way it was.



mertair

Score: 6

11:59 AM on March 31, 2011

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Well, Duh!



rufus floyd

Score: 3

12:51 PM on March 31, 2011

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shigx

Score: 3

12:53 PM on March 31, 2011

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Wow they really rediscovered the wheel with this article



popog

Score: 1

12:55 PM on March 31, 2011

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With the number of obese parents and adults, there is a direct correlation with obese parents and adults and their kids. If a parent or adult is obese, what makes anyone think that their child would be eating properly and exercising, none. Children can eat what they want provided they exercise or at least move around more than they are sitting. Kids today have no exercise, at home or school. Most just sit around playing video games, at the computer or watching TV. You seldom see kids outside, there is no activity at school, and you definitely don't see families at the park or other places exercising or for that fact just walking around.

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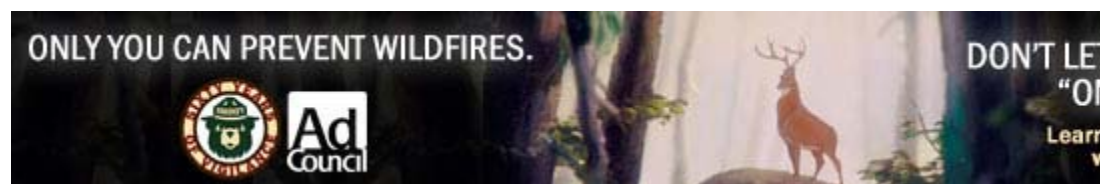
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