

Narrator

For centuries, *ideal body image* has been a topic of great controversy. From the Ancient Egyptian drawings depicting *obesity* as an illness to the perception of beauty captured by Greco-Roman paintings and sculptures illustrating a voluptuous body as a form of flawlessness, we have struggled with what constitutes the perfect human form. But today the concern is not only beauty its health and wellness too.

Natural Sound

Male Doctor: *“Just with your mouth open.”*

Narrator

When children are overweight or obese, it can set them up for a lifetime of health challenges. This program can help parents and grandparents prevent that.

Natural Sound

Female Doctor 1: *“Sick, she’s going to get really sick.”*

Paula Van Ness, Starlight Children’s Foundation

“We are in the midst of an epidemic. We have many children and teenagers who are on the path to diabetes two, but just because they’re on the path today doesn’t mean they have to stay there.”

Natural Sound

Female Doctor 2: *“Step on the scale.”*

Narrator

Children go through growth spurts and as their bodies grow they tend to eat more. But what’s too much weight? When does it become unhealthy weight?

Natural Sound

Female Doctor 2: *“Okay.”*

Narrator

Doctors measure a child’s height and weight at each visit.

Natural Sound

Female Doctor 1: *“Periodically every 6 months once a year, we like to plot out how the children are growing.”*

Narrator

And plot them on a growth chart. The child’s height and weight are then compared to a normal population of children of the same age.

For example: on a growth chart, a boy whose height is at the 50th percentile is as tall or taller than 50 percent of boys his age. That boy’s weight should normally be around the 50th percentile as well. What doctors are looking for as signs of potential weight problems is a weight much greater than would be expected at that age.

But keep in mind that the individual number is not what’s important. A child at the 90 percentile in height and the 90th percentile in weight is just a big kid for his age. The

problem would be if he were at the 50th percentile in height but at the 90th percentile in weight.

Research has shown that some 20 million children are overweight or obese due to adverse lifestyle and unhealthy food habits – habits captured from their parents and other family members who serve as important role models in a child's life.

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD, Northwestern University

“Unfortunately obesity is affecting children just the way it's affecting adults, only its worse in children. The problem being that kids are also exposed to the same lifestyle conditions that adults are.”

Narrator

But because they are kids these habits are likely to stick with them for a very long time.

Francine Kaufman, MD, Children's Hospital Los Angeles

“There are a multiple of things that are affecting our childhood health patterns. Socioeconomic status plays a big role. It is very, very expensive to get a healthy lifestyle. Genes, race, ethnicity it turns out that our ethnic minorities African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and in particular American Indians are at much higher risk for both obesity and type II diabetes.”

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD, Northwestern University

“We have children who no longer have recess. We have children who for reasons of security don't get allowed to go outside and play after school. So when you add together all of those cultural differences and finally include on top of that activities like video games, television watching and just plain computer surfing all of those are very sedentary behaviors.”

Narrator

Conditions associated with Obesity include:

- Type II diabetes
- Heart disease
- High Blood Pressure
- Respiratory problems
- Low self-esteem *and*
- Depression

According to a study by the American Heart Association, children as young as 10 show signs of having arteries of a 45 year-old.

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD, Northwestern University

“Overweight children desperately want not to be overweight. They don't know how to get there. And it's up to us as adults to help those children make those changes. Frequently it involves encouraging the child in terms of what they can do and not worrying about their weight. Changing their lifestyle without worrying about the numbers on the scale is often a wonderful step in the right direction because if they change the behaviors the scale will follow.”

Narrator

Up next we'll meet some families whose children were far down the path to lifelong health problems because of their weight and see how they were able to make a healthy change.

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Natural Sound

Boy: "El pino."

Narrator

12 year-old Edgar Constantino... and his 6 year-old sister, Leslie, love spending time with their dad – Isauro - and playing Mexican-style bingo. Edgar is a 6th grader from inner city Chicago. 6 months ago Edgar was overweight and on the road to pre-diabetes.

Edgar Constantino, Patient

"I was very, very well you know fat (*laughs*). I weighed weight around 150 somewhere around there and I really didn't eat any healthy food. I was eating those fast foods because I like the taste of it and I usually didn't like vegetables or fruits and foods that are good for me."

Deborah Mulligan, MD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Frmr. Chapter President

"There's no getting around fast foods, it's here to stay! What we want to do is start teaching our kids how to select best. One way to look at good selection is color you know. Do we have green salads, are there tomatoes in it, do we have nice crispy broccoli and carrots?"

Narrator

Edgar never went for that bright colored salad, and dad didn't know that he should. One day, while Edgar was sleeping, Isauro noticed something different with his son.

Isauro Constantino, Patient's Father

"I noticed that he was having problems to breathe when he was sleeping that made me concerned a little bit so I talked to his mommy and she noticed too."

Edgar Constantino, Patient

"It was hard to breathe about 7 months ago I had to take very, very deep breaths to actually breathe every about 10 minutes."

Narrator

Edgar's parents knew that this change in their son must be due to his weight. They decided to take Edgar to Children's Memorial Hospital for guidance.

Edgar Constantino, Patient

"My mom she got worried that I would get diabetes like my like my grandma had and I would get high cholesterol and probably die at a very young age."

Natural Sound

Female Doctor 3: "The first one is about fiber."

Linda Somers, RD, Children's Memorial Hospital – Chicago

"When we talk to our families we try to never use the term diet. We try to stay away from that because we like to mimic normal eating. We focus on schedule and we focus on content of the meal. We talk to them in terms of what their plate looks like and protein."

Narrator

Due to his family history, Edgar was put on a healthy lifestyle program a program that required the entire family to participate.

Narrator

Experts say parents, grandparents, and other family members can be the best role models especially when they sit down together with the children for a balanced, nutritious breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD, Northwestern University

"Eating meals together as a family is unfortunately a dying art. Children don't really know what a meal looks like. They're used to eating fast foods or they're used to eating ala cart from a food court and they really don't even know that a normal meal would have a vegetable, a fruit, a serving of dairy."

Narrator

Isauro didn't like to cook so he would take Edgar and his sister out to eat. He was told at Children's Memorial that the eating out will have to change to eating in and preparing meals that will benefit the entire family.

Isauro Constantino, Patient Father

"I just don't want anything bad to happen to him because he's overweight."

Edgar Constantino, Patient

"I really wanted to change as well as my family wanted me to change."

Narrator

Coming up we'll meet another young man who, at age 13, weighed more than 200 pounds. We'll find out his secrets for getting back in shape.

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Narrator

20 year-old Troy Curvey, III lives with his dad Troy, Jr. in Southern California. They enjoy throwing the football around on this beautiful day. Growing up Troy lived with his mother, who cooked food Troy enjoyed.

Troy Curvey, III, Patient

"I was living with my mom in Texas and she cooks all the kind of food that's greasy and you know it tastes good; it just ain't good for you and I just didn't care. I was a big boy. Round face, chubby cheeks, yeah. I was a big boy."

Narrator

But when Troy moved to California to live with his dad, his size was a concern.

Troy Curvey, Jr, Patient's Father

"I was noticing that Troy had a round face and a big stomach. And he was beginning to take on the quote unquote, CURVEY look. All the men in our family kind of look like that."

Helen Binns, MD, Children's Memorial Hospital – Chicago

"Because children follow adults in their eating patterns, in their behavior patterns, you know we shouldn't be surprised that childhood obesity is increasing."

Troy Curvey, Jr, Patient's Father

"I've battled with my weight all my life. My mom was an excellent cook. And she would have steak and gravy and pork chops and gravy every night there was a great meal. And it was encouraged to finish everything on our plates and I was the one looking to see if there was any leftover."

Narrator

The Curvey family has a strong history of heart disease. Troy's grandparents both died from heart complications in their 60's. And when Troy's dad was 35 years old that family history combined with an unhealthy lifestyle to give him a life-threatening wake up call.

Troy Curvey, Jr, Patient's Father

"In 1991 I had a heart attack. I never thought of myself as being obese, I knew I was overweight but I didn't think of myself as being obese. But obviously the bad foods had caught up with me."

Narrator

Troy Jr. survived the heart attack and for a while afterward he worked on maintaining a healthier lifestyle. But eventually he went back to his old, bad habits.

Troy Curvey, Jr, Patient's Father

"In 91 when I had my first heart attack it didn't kill me so I was ok. I forgot about it – started eating again. In 2000 I had another heart attack."

Narrator

This time Troy Jr. got the message, and was now determined to change his lifestyle and enforce the same habits on his family.

Troy Curvey, III, Patient

"I'm very aware of my dad's situation. I'm very aware of my grandfather's situation and how he died and my grandma. So I mean I'm very aware of it. And once he started putting it through our head we pretty much got it."

Narrator

The Curvey's started a strict eating and exercise program that they continue to use today.

Troy Curvey, Jr, Patient's Father

"It's not easy to just change your lifestyle of eating. So you have to begin at an early age to adapt it into your regular routine and it's the same way with physical activity, if you're not use to getting up, getting out walking, exercising, then you have to begin to change your mindset."

Troy Curvey, III, Patient

“We didn’t like it at all. I’m not going to say we liked it. You’re not going to like it. Eating chicken and vegetables every night, you’re not going to like it. Eating oatmeal in the morning –you don’t like it. But once you start to see what it does for you. I was over 200 pounds and I was big, I started lifting I started really just working out. Once you start to see your body transform and you start to like it you just keep going.”

Narrator

Think of it this way: it took years of unhealthy food choices and very little physical activity for children to become obese. By correcting this problem as a family, parents and grandparents will not only be helping their children, but also helping themselves.

Francine Kaufman, MD, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles

“Don’t drink calories! Juice isn’t good for you. Soda isn’t good for you. Drink water.”

Narrator

So how can parents and grandparent get their children to eat better and exercise more? We’ll have some advice coming up, plus we’ll check back in with Edgar and Troy.

###

Narrator

Sometimes getting kids to eat “healthy” foods is a challenge.

Linda Somers, RD, Children’s Memorial Hospital – Chicago

“I tell them if their kids aren’t use to eating brown bread on their sandwiches, to take one piece of white bread and one piece of brown bread and that’s a good start at least and it’s a compromise so sometimes parents have to compromise. Same with cereal ... Cereal is a big deal and so I encourage them, if their kids really really love the sweet cereals with the low fiber and a lot of sugar to take a higher fiber lower sugar cereal and mix it.

What we typically advise parents to do is to take a good look at the labels of foods that they frequently buy. And all you have to do is do that once in order to be able to say ‘Oh this cereal has 18 grams of sugar and zero fiber. I think this cereal, which my child would like just as well, which has half that sugar and twice the amount of fiber is a better choice.”

Deborah Mulligan, MD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Frmr. Chapter President

“You can think of it in terms of color. Avoiding white foods. What are white foods? That’s going to be rice, pasta, spaghetti, bread, potato. How about colored foods? Carrots, broccoli, zucchini, eggplant, salad, fruits, mango, papaya, berries, blueberries, strawberries. There are so many yummy things out there and most of them have bright colors.”

Narrator

Creative ways to get your kids to eat more vegetables can include camouflaging them in with other foods, like chopping up and mixing vegetables in with pasta sauces, lasagnas, casseroles, soup, chili, omelets or adding veggie toppings to pizza.

Some suggestions:

- Let your kids pick the fruits they want to eat when you go shopping
- Mix fruit pieces in with yogurt or serve them with a dip
- Make fruit smoothies
- Offer a fruit salad, with a mix of watermelon, grapes, strawberries - as a dessert or snack
- Make a snack mix with raisins, nuts and cereal
- Add chopped fruit, especially berries and bananas, to your child's cereal
- *And* try dried fruits

Narrator

Pediatricians also recommend that children get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day. And that activity can come in a variety of ways.

Deborah Mulligan, MD, American Academy of Pediatrics, Frmr. Chapter President

"Let's say, you have laundry to fold what's wrong with turning on some music and dancing while you're folding laundry. Dancing is a good form of exercise and its fun kids love it. You can go to the playground and throw a ball, shoot some hoops, run around the park, play tag, play hide and seek. You can use your imagination jumping rope, skipping, riding a bike with the family on the weekends. Sometimes people worry about safety, but again, you can dance in the house right? You can jump rope in the backyard. There are just so many options that aren't organized sports."

Narrator

Edgar Constantino the 12 year old from Chicago joined the local YMCA.

Edgar Constantino, Patient

"What I do there is swimming. I like swimming because I didn't know how to swim, but now I do. Six months ago I couldn't run more than half a block before I felt tired and now I can run about 2 blocks and without getting tired."

Narrator

Back in Southern California, Troy Curvey enjoys running, but lately his father says he's picked up a new hobby.

Troy Curvey, Jr, Patient's Father

"One of the things that I've noticed that Troy's been doing lately is he's been dancing. You know, these guys, I use to come in and lets go to the gym and shoot around and play some basketball, but him and his friends get together and go *dancing*. What's up with that (*Laughs*)."

Troy Curvey, III, Patient

"I run every other day and the days I don't run I work out in the weight room. If I dance, I dance a little bit. It's something to kind of like hang out with my friends while they're doing it."

Narrator

The idea is not to try to lose 10, 20 or even 30 pounds right from the start.

Helen Binns, MD, Children's Memorial Hospital – Chicago

"You don't go from Oh do an hour a day from nothing to an hour. I mean that's not reasonable right. Set goals for yourself that are goals that you're at least 80% sure you can achieve and tackle the things one step at a time."

Natural Sound

Teacher: *"What does it do to the food? It doesn't break it down, but it helps..."*

Narrator

Parents and grandparents can enroll their children in low or no cost hospital or community programs where they'll see a nutritionist and get professional advice on how to bring healthy eating and exercise habits into the home.

The Starlight Children's Foundation, an international organization dedicated to helping children with life threatening and chronic medical conditions, put together the 'Get Fit, Get Right' program to help children across the country make important changes in their nutrition and exercise routines.

Paula Van Ness, Starlight Children's Foundation

"As we got into the program and got to know them better we began to see the ripple affect on their entire families their brothers and sisters and their parents. So over time I think it allowed us to speak directly to the teens, but we can't do that without also involving their parents. Parents are the ones often bringing the food into the home. Parents are often the ones fighting their own health issues their own weight issues so it really requires a change on the part of everyone."

Narrator

Through the Starlight Children's Foundation, hospitals around the country brought in Fun Centers to help motivate kids through video games.

Paula Van Ness, Starlight Children's Foundation

"Fun Centers are mobile entertainment units that Starlight Children's Foundation gives to hospitals to help entertain kids when they're in the hospital get them sort of thinking about something other than their how bad they're feeling. The great innovation for us is to actually put the Nintendo Wii into the Fun Center so it encourages some movement. So I think it's a great tool to use to encourage kids who want to play video games they like video games to actually move a little bit with them."

Natural Sound

Teacher: *"If it's less then it's thumbs up. If it's more"*

Narrator

There are also programs in schools across the country designed to help children, their parents and grandparents learn ways to develop a healthier lifestyle. One example is "Commit 2B Fit" in Broward County Florida.

Natural Sound

Teacher: *"And 190 calories that's almost equal."*

Narrator

3rd and 4th grade students are learning how to read food labels. Their *coach*, Judy, teaches the kids about fat and cholesterol and what types of foods should be eaten on a daily basis and what types of foods should be avoided. Samuel is one of hundreds of kids who take the lessons they learn in the classroom to their parents and grandparents.

Tim Curtin, Director, Community Youth Services

"Families and parents have come out and we'll do a whole family assessment not only on their food intake but their exercise routines in hopes that the family will see this as a family issue and do things as a family."

Natural Sound

Mother: "Okay, very good."

Narrator

Edgar has been in his program for 6 months and has already seen its benefits. He's lost 20 pounds, he can breathe better and he's looking forward to a bright future.

Edgar Constantino, Patient

"I feel different. I don't want to die at a young age. I want to grow up. I want to grow up to be a video game designer or an author."

Narrator

Edgar's dad couldn't be happier for the progress in his son.

Isauro Constantino, Patient's Father

"He's doing he's doing well so because somebody is helping him right so and he helps me too."

Narrator

Troy has made progress but he's hasn't reached his goal yet.

Troy Curvey, III, Patient

"I'm much happier now but still it's not where I'd want to be. You know I want to lose probably about 20-25 more pounds. The biggest challenge is staying consistent."

Narrator

His commitment to a healthier lifestyle is definitely paying dividends.

Troy Curvey, III, Patient

"I get more looks by the girls (*laughs*) which is cool. I've started acting. I'm more comfortable with myself you know. I mean I'm not insecure like I use to be. I'm not as insecure as I used to be. I'm getting to where I want to be."

Billboards:

This program was reviewed by:

Bruce B. Dan, MD
Managing Editor
The Patient Channel

THE PATIENT CHANNEL PRESENTS: MANAGING WEIGHT ISSUES IN CHILDREN 10

Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD
Northwestern University

For kid-tested and kid-approved recipes from the American Heart Association please visit www.americanheart.org and type in "Recipes for Kids" in the search box.

You'll find sample recipes and instructions for purchasing a Healthy Recipes for Kids cookbook from the American Heart Assoc.

For a transcript of this program please visit our website @ www.thepatientchannel.com