

# Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance

## Glossary of Terms

### Balanced Diet

The overall dietary pattern of foods consumed that provide all the essential nutrients in the appropriate amounts to support life processes, such as growth in children without promoting excess weight gain.

### Body Mass Index (BMI)

An indirect measure of body fat calculated as the ratio of a person's body weight in kilograms to the square of a person's height in meters.

$$\text{BMI (kg/m}^2\text{)} = \text{weight (kilograms)} \div \text{height (meters)}^2$$

In children and youth, BMI is based on growth charts for age and gender and is referred to as BMI-for-age, which is used to assess underweight, overweight, and risk for overweight. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a child with a BMI-for-age that is equal to or greater than the 95th percentile is considered to be overweight. In this report, the definition of obesity is equivalent to the CDC definition of overweight.

### Calorie

A unit of measure for energy obtained from food and beverages.

### Energy Balance

A state where energy intake is equivalent to energy expenditure, resulting in no net weight gain or weight loss. In this report, energy balance in children is used to indicate equality between energy intake and energy expenditure that supports normal growth without promoting excess weight gain.

### Energy Density

The amount of energy stored in a given food per unit volume or mass. Fat stores 9 kilocalories/gram (gm), alcohol stores 7 kilocalories/gm, carbohydrate and protein each store 4 kilocalories/gm, fiber stores 1.5 to 2.5 kilocalories/gm, and water has no energy.

### Epidemic

A condition that is occurring more frequently and extensively among individuals in a community or population than is expected.

### Healthy Weight

In children and youth, a level of body fat where comorbidities are not observed.

### Nutrient Density

The amount of nutrients that a food contains per unit volume or mass.

### Obesity

An excess amount of subcutaneous body fat in proportion to lean body mass. In this report, obesity in children and youth refers to the age and gender-specific BMI that are equal to or greater than the 95th percentile of the CDC BMI charts. In most children, these values are known to indicate elevated body fat and to reflect the co-morbidities associated with excessive body fatness.

### Obesogenic

Environmental factors that may promote obesity and encourage the expression of a genetic predisposition to gain weight.

### Physical Activity

Body movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure above the basal level. Physical activity consists of athletic, recreational, housework, transport or occupational activities that require physical skills and utilize strength, power, endurance, speed, flexibility, range of motion, or agility.

### Physical Inactivity

Not meeting the type, duration, and frequency of recommended leisure time and occupational physical activities.

### Prevention

With regard to obesity, *primary* prevention represents avoiding the occurrence of obesity in a population; *secondary* prevention represents early detection of obesity through screening with the purpose of limiting its occurrence; and *tertiary* prevention involves preventing the sequelae of obesity in childhood and adulthood.

### Sedentary

A way of living or lifestyle that requires minimal physical activity and that encourages inactivity through limited choices, disincentives, and/or structural or financial barriers.

### Well-Being

A view of health that takes into account a child's physical, social, and emotional health.