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10 years ago, many Parents didn't have to work at getting young children to be active. Most children were constantly in continual motion. But these days even young children are inactive and more dependent upon adults to provide them with different forms of exercise such as sport.

Lack of exercise is a major reason for the growing rate of obesity among children. One cause of this is the new modern day technologies which have boomed in this generation and therefore have created 'couch potato' children. Examples of these 'distractions' are computer games and television.

Watching TV for even as few as two to five hours per week is linked to being overweight and as a result of this, the percentage of overweight children had doubled in the last 30 years.

Dr Aric Sigman, of the British Psychological Society explains that most of the unpleasant health affects recognized that are linked with TV viewing are related to duration of viewing. He quotes that "There's nothing to be lost by watching less TV but a great deal to be lost by continuing to watch as we do".

Another Cause of obesity is unhealthy junk food. The varieties of foods have also changed in the last 10 years. Nowadays, children are excessively eating more fatty foods such as chocolate or chips which therefore increase the figures of obesity in children every year. 20 percent of British children are overweight and 10 percent are obese.

Benefits of exercise:

Exercise can help strengthen children's bones now as well as later in life. Children who partake in weight-bearing, impact sports such as running, gymnastics and dance have higher bone density than children who are not active or children whose major activity is a non-weight-bearing exercise such as swimming. Building strong bones in childhood helps to sustain bone health in the future.

Energetic children may increase their possibility of becoming healthy adults. Children who benefit from exercise may develop a lifelong, healthy habit of being physically active. Children will enjoy better health as adults.

Physical activity can decrease the risk of obesity, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease among adults. People who remain active on a regular basis tend to live longer than people who are not regularly active.

The amount of exercise children need:

Health promotion experts recommend that kids are active for an hour every day. Regular exercise will improve balance and muscular strength and help to make the heart and lungs more efficient, and can improve their physical and mental health too.

Children go through several distinct developmental stages. For age specific activities, these are the levels of activity they should partake in:

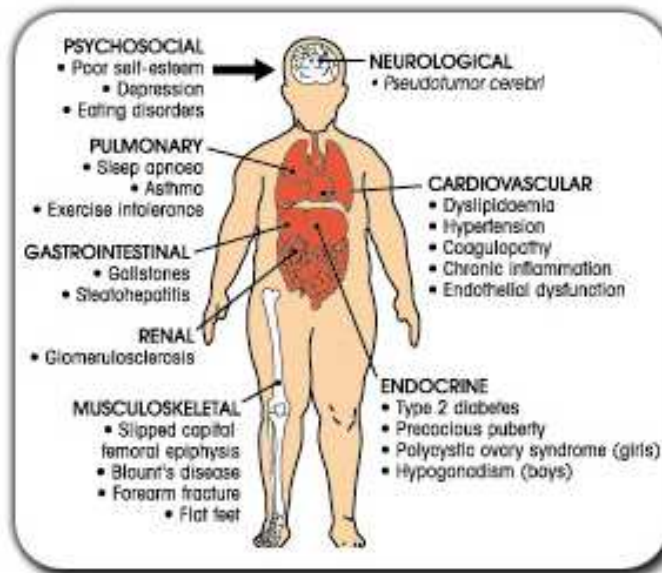
- **First 2 Years: 1 ½ hours of daily exercise.** the child should be allowed to be active and explore naturally. The adult should help them develop good eating habits.
- **2 to 5 Years: 2 hours of daily exercise.** The child should Practice basic skills, such as throwing, kicking, and jumping. 60 minutes of planned exercise and

another 60 of free play.

- **5 to 8 Years: 1 hour or more of daily exercise.** The child should be given loosely structured team sports to have fun, be with friends, and burn off energy. 15 minute breaks should be allowed.
- **8 Years and older: 1 hour or more of daily exercise.** As the child gets older, the better their physical lifestyle, the easier it would be for them to keep an active routine maintained. Kids need to consume a healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids for active play. They also need to eat sufficient amount of calories to provide them with the energy to be active.

Researcher Russ Pate, a professor of exercise science at the University of South Carolina Columbia suggests that "If kids are not getting enough activity at school, then it's not likely they will get the remaining activity after they leave," he explains. Still, "we encourage parents to make sure their children are active at home."

The problems which could arise if children don't exercise:



- **Type 2 diabetes:** Children who develop type 2 diabetes are at bigger risk of developing eye, heart and kidney disease. It happens when a resistance to insulin develops, often worsened by excess weight, leaving the pancreas unable to produce enough insulin in the body.
- **Hyperlipidaemia:** High levels of one or more of the lipid substances in the blood, especially cholesterol or triglycerides.
- **Asthma:** Recently, a connection between asthma and obesity has been discovered in the United States. A link of a similar sort may be here in the UK; 10 Researchers discovered that the most obese children were 77 percent more likely to have indications of asthmatic symptoms.

The following are less common problems which unhealthy/obese children may obtain:

- Hypertension: Blood pressure above the normal range. This can lead to serious illnesses if not effectively treated, such as strokes, heart, eye and kidney disease.
- Orthopaedic problems: injuries or disease of the skeletal system and associated muscles, joints and ligaments due to excess body weight from obese children. This problem could also lead to overgrowth of the leg bones or other abnormalities in bone development.
- Sleep apnoea: A condition where normal breathing pattern is disturbed during sleep. This affects the amount of sleep the child has which as a result, affects their concentration at school. This condition affects 7 percent of overweight kids.

BUA's (The British United Provident Association is a global health and care organisation) assistant medical director Dr. Paula Franklin says:

"With the growing problems of childhood and adult obesity in Britain it is vital that we inspire young people to exercise regularly and eat healthily. Research also suggests that regular exercise affects overall well-being and can even have a positive impact on academic grades."

In conclusion, yes it is a problem that our children aren't enough exercise due to all the health problems they could face in the future. Daily exercise has many positive factors which is why adults should encourage physical activities such as sport as much as possible, especially because of all the modern day unhealthy distractions that children face.