

2005 Earth Share Radio Public Service Announcement
Script and Sources

“Shoes”

We teach them how to tie their shoes. They teach us how to live our lives. We teach them long division. They teach us how to bank online. Our children will always outgrow us, but for the first time in generations, they may not outlive us.¹ Over the last twenty-five years, the percent of overweight children, aged six to eleven, has doubled. The percent of overweight teenagers, tripled.² Obesity kills.³ Heart disease. High blood pressure. Diabetes. All are linked to obesity.⁴ A problem that could be greatly reduced just by having a place to exercise.⁵ Right now, people are working hard to put parks and playgrounds where children live. Where children will use them.⁶

Finding out how you can help, is as easy as tying your shoes.

Log on to EarthShare.org. Now.

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¹ “Within 50 years obesity likely will shorten the average life span of 77.6 years by at least two to five years. That is more than the impact of cancer or heart disease,’ said lead author S. Jay Olshansky, a longevity researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago. ‘This would reverse the mostly steady increase in American life expectancy that has occurred in the past two centuries and would have tremendous social and economic consequences,’ Olshansky and colleagues contend. ‘We think today’s younger generation will have shorter and less healthy lives than their parents for the first time in modern history unless we intervene,’ Olshansky said. Already, the alarming rise in childhood obesity is fueling a new trend that has shaved four to nine months off the average U.S. life span, the researchers say. With obesity affecting at least 15% of U.S. school-age children, ‘it’s not pie in the sky,’ Olshansky said. ‘The children who are extremely obese are already here.’ The report appears in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (The researchers based their predictions on data on the prevalence of obesity from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and previously published estimates of years of life lost from obesity.)”

Associated Press. “Report Says Obesity Will Reduce US Life Span Up To 5 Yrs.” The Wall Street Journal. March 16, 2005.

² “In the time interval between NHANES II and III, the prevalence of overweight among children ages 6-11 years increased from an estimated 7 percent to 11 percent (figure 1), and among adolescents ages 12-19 years, increased from 5 percent to 11 percent. One of the national health objectives for 2010 is to reduce the prevalence of overweight from the NHANES III baseline of 11 percent. However, the NHANES 1999-2002 overweight estimates suggest that since 1994, overweight in youths has not leveled off or decreased, and is increasing to even higher levels. The data for adolescents are of notable concern because overweight adolescents are at increased risk to become overweight adults. The 1999-2002 findings for children and adolescents suggest the likelihood of another generation of overweight adults who may be at risk for subsequent overweight and obesity related health conditions.”

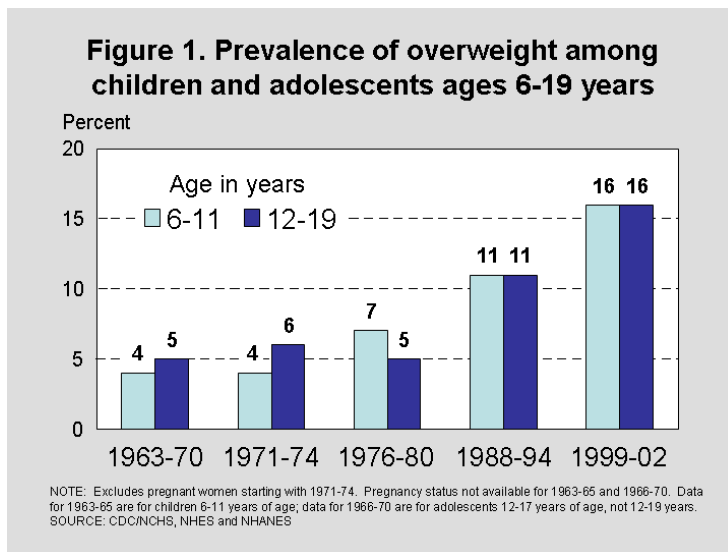


Table 1. Prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents ages 6-19 years, for selected years 1963-65 through 1999-2002

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Age (years) ¹	NHANES 1963-65 1966-70 ²	NHANES 1971-74	NHANES 1976-80	NHANES 1988-94	NHANES 1999-2002
6-11	4	4	7	11	16
12-19	5	6	5	11	16

¹Excludes pregnant women starting with 1971-74. Pregnancy status not available for 1963-65 and 1966-70.

²Data for 1963-65 are for children 6-11 years of age; data for 1966-70 are for adolescents 12-17 years of age, not 12-19 years.

“Prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents: United States, 1999-2002.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. February 8, 2005.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm>.

³ “While obesity remains the second-largest underlying cause of premature death, it isn't poised to overtake tobacco as the leading cause of premature mortality, as the government originally asserted. Tobacco accounted for an estimated 435,000 deaths in 2000, according to the CDC. Deaths from poor diet and physical inactivity, a category that includes obesity, rose 22% between 1990 and 2000.”

McKay, B. “CDC Cuts Estimate Of Deaths From Obesity.” The Wall Street Journal. January 19, 2005

⁴ “Obese people suffer increased risk of high blood pressure, hypertension, high blood cholesterol, non-insulin-dependent diabetes, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, gallstones, osteoarthritis, some types of cancer (such as endometrial, breast, prostate, and colon), complications of pregnancy, poor female reproductive health (such as menstrual irregularities, infertility, and irregular ovulation), and bladder control problems.”

“Increasing Physical Activity: A Report on Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. October 26, 2001.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5018al.htm>

⁵ “Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. In a study published by the CDC, creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 percent increase in the percentage of people exercising on three or more days per week. A group of studies reviewed in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine showed that “creation of or enhanced access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach” produced a 48.4 percent increase in frequency of physical activity. The same group of studies showed that access to a place to exercise results in a 5.1 percent median increase in aerobic capacity, along with a reduction in body fat, weight loss, improvements in flexibility, and an increase in perceived energy. When people have nowhere to walk, they gain weight. Obesity is more likely in unwalkable neighborhoods, but goes down when measures of walkability go up: dense housing, well-connected streets, and mixed landuses reduce the probability that residents will be obese.”

Ulrich, R. “View through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery,” Science 224 (1984): 420–421, cited in Howard Frumkin, “Beyond Toxicity: Human Health and the Natural Environment, American Journal of Preventive Medicine 20, no. 3, (2001): p. 237.

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⁶ “The new research dovetails with the Trust for Public Land’s strategy of creating parks where people live,’ says Kathy Blaha, TPL’s senior vice president for national programs. ‘TPL is creating new parks because too many people in the country don’t have access to parks,’ Blaha explains. ‘We make the assumption that kids will not or cannot travel a long distance to get to parks, and that a mother pushing a baby stroller is not going to walk two or three miles to get to a park.’ Equity in park access is a major concern for those working to bring parks to American cities. Minority and lower-income Americans are more likely than the general population at large to suffer from excessive weight, obesity, and the diseases related to lack of exercise. And in many cities it is exactly these groups that have the least access to the parks and greenways that could facilitate such exercise.”

Sherer, Paul M. “A Healthier America? It’s a Walk in the Park.” Trust for Public Land. January 2004.
http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=14589&folder_id=2606.