

**HEALTH BULLETIN
DARLA HILLIARD R.N., M.S.N.
SCHOOL NURSE**



CHILDHOOD OBESITY

STATISTICS

- Nationally, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the past 20 years. Rates for Pennsylvania's young people are higher than national averages.
- One in seven young people are obese and one in three is overweight. Obese children are twice as likely as non-obese children to become obese adults.
- One quarter of children ages 5 to 10 show early warning signs for heart disease, such as elevated blood cholesterol or high blood pressure.
- Type 2 Diabetes can no longer be called "adult onset" diabetes because of rising rate in children. The incidence of Type 2 diabetes in adolescents increased ten-fold between 1982 and 1994.

SCHOOL SCREENING PROGRAM

Current school health regulations require that a school nurse conduct height and weight measurements of students annually. The revised procedures now require the nurses to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is a "weight for stature" index that can be used to determine whether a student is within a normal growth pattern overweight or at risk for being either overweight or underweight. *During the 2007-2008 school year letters will be sent home with all students stating their BMI percentile.*

The Body Mass Index (BMI) for age percentile is as follows:

- BMI less than 5th percentile—underweight
- BMI between 85th & 95th percentile—at risk for overweight
- BMI equal to or greater than 95th percentile—overweight

2007-2008 BLAIRSVILLE ELEMENTARY BMI RESULTS

	Less than 5%	85-95%	Greater than 95%
KDG (80 students)	0	18	11
FIRST(84 students)	0	9	20
SECOND(71 students)	2	18	14
THIRD(81 students)	0	15	23
FOURTH(85 students)	3	18	20
FIFTH(92 students)	0	18	18

KINDERGARTEN: 22 ½ at risk for overweight and 13 ¾ % are overweight

FIRST: 10% are at risk for overweight and 24 % are overweight

SECOND: 25% are at risk for overweight and 20 % are overweight

THIRD: 18 ½ % are at risk for overweight and 28% are overweight

FOURTH: 21% are at risk for overweight and 23 ½ % are overweight

FIFTH: 19 ½ % are at risk for overweight and 19 ½ % are overweight

AVERAGE FOR BLAIRSVILLE ELEMENTARY

- **19 ½ % are at risk for overweight**
- **21 ½ % are overweight**

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS TO HELP THEIR OVERWEIGHT CHILD

- **Be supportive**
Involve the entire family in physical activities.
Do not single out the child who is overweight.
Do not put your child on a weight loss diet unless your physician instructs you..
Tell your child that he/she is loved and is important. Children's feelings about themselves often are based on their parents' feelings about them.
- **Encourage healthy eating habits**
Buy and serve more fruits and vegetables.
Buy fewer soft drinks and high fat/high calorie snack foods like chips, dip, and candy.
Eat breakfast every day.
Plan healthy meals and eat together as a family.
Eat fast food less often.
Offer your child water or low-fat milk more often than fruit juice. Fruit juice is a healthy choice but is high in calories.
Try not to use food as a reward when encouraging children to eat. Promising dessert to a child for eating vegetables, for example sends the message that vegetables are less valuable than dessert.
Start with small servings and let your child ask for more if he/she is still hungry.
- **Encourage daily physical activity**
Set a good example. Be physically active and have fun. If your child sees you exercising they will be encouraged to do the same.
Encourage your child to join a sports team or class i.e. gymnastics, dance, etc
Be sensitive to your child's needs. If your child feels uncomfortable participating in certain activities encourage another choice.
Be active together as a family.
- **Discourage inactive pastimes**
Set limits on the amount of time spent watching TV, playing video games and computer activities.
Encourage family activities such as walking together, going to the park, etc
- **Be a positive role model**
Choose healthy food and active pastimes for yourself. Your children will in turn learn healthy choices.

