



OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

Why should overweight and obesity be addressed?

Preventing being overweight and obesity is equally important as preventing other diseases. Being overweight is not identified and treated for the sake of appearance or to achieve beauty ideals and the like, but because the risks of bad health are so great. Obesity often leads to high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. No one should be bullied or in any way be exposed because of their weight, so together we must try to counteract this.

Overweight and obesity are increasing. Today, approximately every fifth school child in Sweden is overweight or obese, which leads to both physical and mental illness in the short and long term. Child obesity is very likely to lead to bad health in adulthood. Treatment is more effective the sooner it is taken. Therefore, support for children and young people who develop overweight should be given as early as possible.

Growth checks with the school nurse are important because it is a good health marker. As a guardian, you may not even have noticed the weight gain since you see the child every day and the increase occurs gradually. With more and more overweight people in society, we do not always see the child as overweight, so it can come as a surprise when the school nurse notes that. It is mainly changes, when the weight suddenly increases more than expected, that the school nurse pays attention to. At the age of five to seven, children have a "slim period", where it is completely normal to be able to count the ribs. Many parents worry unnecessarily at this age that the child is eating too little.

What should I do if my child is overweight?

- Good exercise, food and sleep habits are important for everyone regardless of weight and should preferably be established early.
- Pay attention to and address other problems, such as mental illness or social situation, which can indirectly lead to being overweight by affecting health choices.
- Involve friends, parents, relatives and school staff to get support and work to ensure that you have a common ground to deal with weight and lifestyle.
- Children often want to help themselves and be able to jump and climb like other children. Our task then becomes to ensure that they can do it and give the child strengthened self-esteem.
- Recommendations for physical activity should be achieved even if it does not affect weight. The body becomes stronger and many diseases are prevented. If the child is not used to moving, start at a low level and increase gradually.
- The goal is for the child to not gain weight, or grow more in length than the weight increases. In this way, the BMI (body mass index) curve begins to point in the right direction and a healthy weight can be achieved in the long term.

Want to know more or get help?

Healthy lifestyle choices are good for everyone regardless of weight. Do not hesitate to contact the school nurse for advice and support and to get answers to your questions.

A physiotherapist can be found via www.1177.se and is to be contacted if the child is experiencing discomfort due to his/her weight or has difficulties with body control and movements.

Find out what help is available where you live, it can be a little different in different parts of the country with support groups, physical activity on prescription and so on.

Visit the patient organization Riksförbundet HOBS – Hälsa oberoende av storlek (Health regardless of size) at www.HOBS.se

Search for *Övervikt och fetma i barn* (overweight and obesity in children) at www.1177.se.