



25.01.2016 - The report of the commission on 'Ending Childhood Obesity' was presented by World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva today, January 25th. ☐☐

The facts and figures driving the report are indicative of the burning need to tackle child obesity:

- The number of overweight or obese infants and young children globally, aged 0 to 5 years, increased from 32 million in 1990 to 42 million in 2013.
- In 2013, 42 million infants and young children were overweight or obese.
- 70 million young children will be overweight or obese by 2025 if current trends continue.
- The rates are increasing 30% higher in low- and middle-income countries, than that of developed countries.

Childhood obesity is associated with a wide range of serious health complications and an increased risk of premature onset of illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease, cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance, musculoskeletal disorders, some cancers and disability.

WHO Recommendations

Choosing healthy foods for infants and young children is critical because food preferences are established in early life. Feeding infants energy-dense, high-fat, high-sugar and high-salt foods is a key contributor to childhood obesity.

For infants and young children:

- Early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour of birth
- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life
- The introduction of nutritionally-adequate and safe complementary (solid) foods at 6 months together with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond

School-aged children and adolescents:

- Limit energy intake from total fats and sugars
- Increase consumption of fruit and vegetables, as well as legumes, whole grains and nuts

- Engage in regular physical activity (60 minutes a day)

Furthermore, the food industry can play a significant role in reducing childhood obesity by:

- Reducing the fat, sugar and salt content of complementary foods and other processed foods
- Ensuring that healthy and nutritious choices are available and affordable to all consumers;
- Practicing responsible marketing especially those aimed at children and teenagers.

UNRICs Related Links

- [WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health](#)
- [The Report on Ending Childhood Obesity](#)
- [WHO Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition](#)
- [FAQs on childhood obesity](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goal #3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages](#)