

[IMAGE]

## **Dramatic Rise in Childhood Obesity**

The percentage of overweight Americans appears to be increasing dramatically. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, an ongoing national health study, showed that adult obesity increased over 50% between 1991-1999. Other research has indicated that a high number of children in the U.S. might be overweight.

The authors of a recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* determined obesity trends in over 8,000 children, ages 4 to 12, between 1986 and 1998. The prevalence of overweight children increased over 120% among Hispanic and African-American children and over 50% among Caucasian children in the 12-year study. Nearly one-quarter of Hispanic/African-American children and roughly one-eighth of Caucasian children were considered overweight in 1998.

Obesity can lead to multiple problems if persisting until later in life, including a severely increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. In addition, obesity can damage a child psychologically due to taunting from peers, and can form poor life-long eating habits. If you have children, talk to your doctor about sensible nutrition and exercise guidelines to keep them healthy for a lifetime. To read more on pediatric health, head to <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/pediatrics>.

### *Reference:*

Strauss RS, Pollack HA. Epidemic increase in childhood overweight, 1986-1998. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2001;286(22), pp. 2845-2848.

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