

[IMAGE]

The Cost of Obesity

By Editorial Staff

If your child's body-mass index (BMI) is on the high end, helping them achieve a healthy weight won't just benefit them from a health perspective (physically and emotionally) – it will also save you (and the entire health care system) money. That's the conclusion from a new study that evaluated medical expenses in children / young adults ages 2-19 based on their BMI.

Among more than 200,000 U.S. children / young adults with private insurance, annual total and out-of-pocket costs were higher for all BMI categories (underweight *and* overweight) compared to healthy weight. In particular, being severely overweight raised expenditures by \$909 per person. "Applied to the population of privately insured US individuals aged 2 to 19 years, we estimated that total medical expenditures associated with underweight and obesity were about \$1 billion and \$2.4 billion (in 2018 USD), respectively," stated the study authors, underscoring the significance of their findings, which appear in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

[bmi - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark](#) With an estimated one in five U.S. children obese per the BMI, finding solutions that can optimize their health (and as a side benefit, save money spent on health care) is critical. What are some of the potential causes of childhood obesity? Poor diet and inadequate exercise, pure and simple. According to the Mayo Clinic, "One of the best strategies to reduce childhood obesity is to improve the eating and exercise habits of your entire family." After all, you can't expect your child to adopt lifestyle behaviors that promote a healthy weight when you're modeling the opposite, right?

Bear in mind that depending on your child's age and other factors related to growth, their BMI (high or low) at a certain stage / age may be more concerning than at another stage / age. That's where your doctor comes in. If you're worried about your child's weight, talk to your doctor – that's step #1 in determining whether steps are needed to change the situation before it gets worse.

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