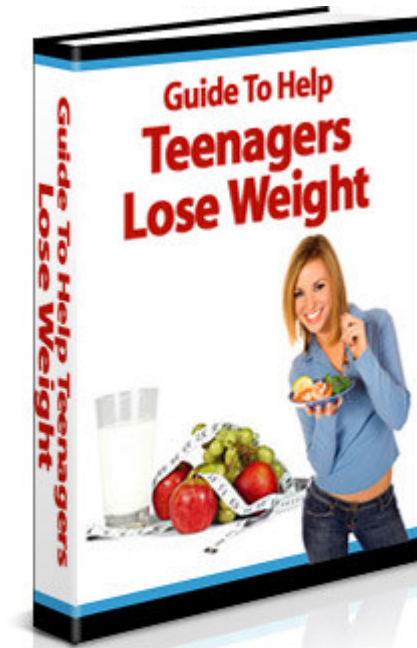


*Guide to Help Teenagers Lose Weight*

# **Guide to Help Teenagers Lose Weight**

(Ways to Ensure That They Lose Weight Safely and Without Any Adverse problems)



# *Guide to Help Teenagers Lose Weight*

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## **Introduction**

Since the late 1990's, there has been a dramatic increase in obesity in Americans, regardless of age, according to information collected and analyzed by the National Center for Health Statistics.

Almost 9 million (15%) children between the ages of 6 and 19 are overweight, and this number is still growing according to information gathered between 1999 and 2000 (triple the number of 1980).

The information has also shown that another 15% of children between the ages of 6 and 19 are at risk of becoming overweight also. Obesity is defined as having an excessive accumulation of body fat which will result in the person's body being about 20% heavier than their ideal body weight. So those people whose weight is above what is considered their ideal range, are defined as being overweight. Obesity is a common eating disorder that is associated with teens.

Although teens may have fewer weight related health issues than adults, those teens that are overweight now are much more likely to become overweight as an adult. Teens who are overweight (in fact people of all ages that are overweight) are at risk from a number of different health issues, and these include:

1. Heart Disease
2. Diabetes
3. High Blood Pressure
4. Strokes
5. Some forms of Cancer

Those teens who are obese may find that they are not only physically unfit, but their well being is usually very low as well. Many obese people will also tend to have a shorter life expectancy than those who are the right weight for their body size. Plus, it can also lead to social disabilities and unhappiness, which in turn may cause them stress and in some cases, may make them mentally ill as well.

A study that was carried and details which were released in May 2004 suggested that overweight children are more likely to be involved in bullying than those children who are a normal weight. But they can not only be the victims of bullying, they may be the perpetrators as well. The development of their own personal identity and body image is an important goal for any teenager.

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There are a number of causes for obesity which center around an imbalance in the teens energy they put into their bodies, (calories that they obtain from the food they eat) and the energy they release from their bodies (how good their metabolism is, and how much physical activity they take part in).

Often teens when a teen is overweight, it is because there is a problem with the nutritional value of their diet, or it may be psychological, familial or physiological, all of which we will discuss a little bit more.

### **The Family**

Often children and teens are more at risk of becoming overweight if they have two overweight parents. Although in some cases, this may be due to a powerful genetic factor, or it may be because they are modeling themselves after what they see their parents eating. Also physical activities, if any, they take part in, can indirectly affect the teen.

### **Inactivity**

On average, an American child will spend several hours each day watching television or on a computer. Compare this to years ago, when this time would have been spent doing some form of physical activity instead. There is a large amount of teens and children who are now overweight, as they are expending little energy, and often eat high calorie snacks while watching TV or playing on the computer. Today in the US, about 1/3 of elementary school children carry out some form of physical education, and less than 1/5 take part in physical activity programs after school.

### **Heredity**

Recently, information has shown that heredity can influence fatness in a child and teen. It was found that children born to overweight mothers have been found to be less active, and often gain more weight by the age of 3 months compared to those children born to mothers who are a normal weight, which suggests a possible inborn drive to conserve energy.

In this book, we will look at various ways in which help can be provided to overweight teens, and how they can lose weight successfully without them resorting to fad diets etc.

## **Chapter 1 –**

**Psychological Issues for Teens Relating to Being Overweight** For many overweight teens, their physical health and well being are the least of their problems. Much more relevant is the teasing and abuse they receive from their peers at school and near where they live. For many, it is not only what others think of them that is upsetting, but it is what they actually think of themselves.

A good percentage of teenagers (especially girls) are clinically depressed because they are so preoccupied with their weight. It does not help that in every model or every actress you see, and that people tend to aspire to be, are usually stick thin. There is evidence now amounting to just how much pressure is being placed on obese teenagers.

A recent survey reveals that these kids rate the quality of life they have as low as that of young cancer patients while they are having chemotherapy. There are other studies which have been carried out that report increased rates of depression, low self esteem and isolation from other members of their age group, which can result in behavioral problems in some. These teenagers are less likely to be accepted into higher education (college) or to get married, and are more likely to be part of the lower socioeconomic groups.

What is worse is that many overweight teens will be hard on themselves, and will often be mistreated by others. A study carried out in 2001 by Latner and Stunkard finds that this situation, rather than improving, has steadily got worse. Often, those teens who are overweight can suffer from other problems such as cardiovascular, orthopedic, gastrointestinal, respiratory, hormonal, neurological and metabolic diseases (diabetes). These can often manifest themselves through psychological problems, and you may then have to ask for assistance from a trained professional in order to deal with them. Today in the US, there are some weight loss programs for kids which are residential, and combine psychological therapy with behavior change therapy in order to improve the teens self esteem as well as their physical health.

So, during this book, we will look at ways in which those teens, who wish to lose weight, can do so safely.