

Orthopaedic Connection

Bones and Childhood Obesity

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Children's growing bones and childhood obesity are a bad combination. It is a great concern to me as an Orthopaedic Surgeon. I see a lot of children in my practice and enjoy it very much. They are unique and it is particularly rewarding to help a child. When you help a child the parents are grateful and it is just uplifting for our whole staff. It is a neat part of what I do.

The increase in childhood obesity (one in six children are obese) during my time in practice is very noticeable. It is leading to some orthopaedic challenges.

The Body Is Smart

I'll try not to get too complicated. A resistance to the hormone leptin is a major contributor to childhood obesity. Leptin is an appetite hormone made by fat cells. Eating sugar rich food triggers fat cells to secrete leptin.

Blount's Disease

It is a condition around the knee associated with changes in the growth centers on both sides of the knee joint. It leads to bow legs and serious deformity. While it is an unusual condition it is serious and needs to be recognized.

Slipped Epiphysis

This is a condition of the hip in which the growth plate of the hip softens and allows the ball part of the hip to "slip" gradually out of position. Trauma is not a factor. The first sign is limping. Pain is usually not a factor. It does cause serious hip disturbances if not treated with surgery. The condition occurs in obese children almost invariably.

Fractures

The prevalence of fractures in obese children is very high. The fractures tend to occur mostly in the upper extremities. Whether there is increased bone mass in the lower extremities due to the weight is unknown.

Relatively speaking there may be less bone mass in the upper extremities which aren't being loaded to the same degree.

Obesity in children is a large public health problem that leads to many other medical conditions in addition to the orthopaedic conditions.

It is not a harmless condition as far as the child's bones are concerned. I imagine this information is something our readers are not aware of.

Stay with your Masters level course in Orthopaedic conditions!

I want you to "***Be In the Know***".

For more information about all the orthopaedic conditions I treat at the office and hospital check out our teaching website for patients and families, www.orthopodsurgео.com, which can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush