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A New Way of Living

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The basic concept of what it means to be healthy has evolved beyond the mere absence of illnesses to becoming proactive in our approach as health providers by identifying risk factors that can lead to significant disease. Childhood obesity is one of the greatest concerns in this day and age. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, childhood obesity among all ages, races, and genders have increased dramatically over the last two decades. The United States now has the highest obesity rate of any industrialized nation in the world and obesity has become a contributing risk factor for four of the seven leading causes of death.

One of the more popular tools in evaluating obesity is measuring the Body Mass Index (BMI). This measure takes into account the child's bodyweight based on his or her height. BMI is recommended as a screening tool for children and adolescents age 2 to 18 years in an attempt to identify those people at greatest risk for being overweight, so that assessment and treatment can begin. A healthy weight is defined as a BMI of 18.5 to less than 25; overweight, as greater than a BMI of 25; and obesity, as greater than a BMI of 30. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, individuals who are obese (BMI > 30) have a 50 to 100% increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight.

The heart of the problem is our life style. Physical activity needs to be a daily event, as does healthy eating. No longer can we afford to live and eat the we have in the past. We must teach our children a whole new way of living. For a complete evaluation or consultation please call Pediatric Services at 413-525-1870.