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A study reveals that eating at home prevents childhood obesity

March 5th, 2012

University of Granada researchers have confirmed that there is a significant direct relationship between the nutritional status of children and the person who prepares their meal. The study revealed that the children who have lunch at home with their mother present a better nutritional status and are at a lower risk of suffering obesity than children whose meal is prepared by a person other than their mother.

The study -recently published in the journal *Nutrición hospitalaria*- reveals that the nutritional status of children strongly relies on the person who prepares their meal. Accordingly, children who do not eat at home present a poorer nutritional status than children whose meal is prepared by their mother. At present, "the mother is the family member who best knows the nutritional needs of children and has the strongest nutritional knowledge for the preparation of children's meals"- researchers state.

The study was conducted by University of Granada researchers María José Aguilar Cordero and Emilio González Jiménez (Department of Nursing), Carmen García García (Physical Anthropology Laboratory), Pedro García López (Department of Statistics), Carlos Alberto Padilla López and Judit Álvarez Ferre (PAI research group CTS-367 of the Junta de Andalucía) and Esther Ocete Hita (Department of Pediatrics).

718 Children from Granada

The researchers sampled 718 school children aged between 9-17 years from 13 public and private schools located in the province of Granada, Spain. By using anthropometric measurements, the researchers assessed children's weight, size and body mass index (BMI) by age and sex. Skinfold measurements were performed at six sites: biceps, triceps, subscapular, supraspinale, calf and thigh, in other words: waist, hips, arms and thighs.

In addition, the University of Granada researchers designed a questionnaire to assess the children's family environment, consumption frequency of specific foods, and physical exercise habits. Their aim was to examine the relationship between family environment and obesity and overweight in childhood.

Sedentary Leisure

Researches found that there is a relationship between sedentary leisure habits and BMI. Statistically significant differences were found in BMI between children with sedentary habits and children with good physical exercise habits. Thus, the more time devoted to watching TV, playing video games and Internet surfing, the higher the BMI.

The researchers concluded that "it is extremely important" that healthy habits are promoted and encouraged within the family; children should play "traditional games", which usually involve physical exercise. Healthy habits and physical exercise are essential for achieving healthy children.

More information:

Nutr Hosp. 2012;27(1):177-184

Provided by University of Granada

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