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Eating mom-made food prevents childhood obesity

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A new study has confirmed that the nutritional status of children strongly relies on the person who prepares their meal.

University of Granada researchers found that children who eat at home 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.

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," the researchers stated.

For the study, the researchers sampled 718 school children aged between 9 and 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. Skin-fold measurements were performed at six sites- waist, hips, arms and thighs.

In addition, the 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 in childhood.

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 keeping children healthy.

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