



The Federation of International Societies for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

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FISPGHAN 2026/005

FISPGHAN Statement for World Obesity Day (4 March 2026)

Childhood Obesity: A Global Health Crisis

Childhood obesity remains one of the most pressing public health challenges worldwide. On World Obesity Day 2026, the Federation of International Societies for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (**FISPGHAN**) reaffirms its commitment to addressing childhood obesity as a critical global health priority affecting millions of children. This growing epidemic threatens not only current child health but also the future burden of noncommunicable diseases across the lifespan.

For the first time in history, the number of children and adolescents living with obesity has surpassed that of those who are underweight. Globally, **1 in 10 school-aged children and adolescents (5–19 years), or nearly 188 million individuals, live with obesity**, and approximately **35 million children under five years of age are affected by overweight or obesity**, according to WHO growth standards.

Childhood obesity significantly increases the risk of metabolic disorders, including type 2 diabetes, metabolic-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and dyslipidemia, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal complications, and premature mortality in adulthood.

Preventing Childhood Obesity

Effective prevention requires a **comprehensive, multicomponent, and life-course approach grounded in collaboration**. Early-life nutrition, families, schools, communities, and supportive public policies must work together to achieve sustainable and equitable outcomes. Evidence shows that unhealthy food environments—dominated by ultra-processed, energy-dense foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats—strongly influence children's diets beyond individual or parental control. Prevention efforts must therefore extend beyond individual behavior change to include coordinated, system-level actions that promote healthier food environments.

Shared Responsibility Across Society

Individuals and Families

- Promote breastfeeding, balanced diets, and supportive feeding behaviors
- Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages and ultra-processed foods
- Encourage regular physical activity and healthy screen-time habits

Schools and Communities

- Provide healthy school meals and access to clean drinking water
- Deliver nutrition education
- Create safe, activity-friendly environments
- Enforce restrictions on unhealthy food marketing

Policy and Societal Level

- Regulate food advertising targeting children
- Improve food labeling standards
- Implement policies that support healthy food environments



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A Global Call to Action

FISPGHAN calls on governments, healthcare professionals, parents, schools, and industry leaders to take urgent and coordinated action by:

- Strengthening childhood obesity prevention programs through early-life nutrition and family education, including limiting screen time at home.
- Implementing school-based initiatives that promote healthy eating and regular physical activity.
- Regulating the marketing of unhealthy foods to children and improving food labeling policies.
- Advocating for policies that foster healthier food environments and reduce socioeconomic barriers to healthy living.

FISPGHAN's Commitment

FISPGHAN is dedicated to global collaboration, strengthening research, and empowering healthcare professionals to tackle childhood obesity. Together, through education, advocacy, and evidence-based policy reform, we can change the trajectory of this epidemic and secure a healthier future for children worldwide.

Let us act today for a healthier tomorrow.

#WorldObesityDay #PreventChildObesity #HealthyFuture

Link to FISPGHAN educational media:

<https://fispghan.org/index.php/obesity-resources>

Watch the videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgE--FQznqM&t=87s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8-tnKzrQgg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbN9rRGiMoQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX9yM7niFQU>

Selected References

1. Koletzko B, et al. Prevention of childhood obesity: A Position Paper of the Federation of International Societies for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition (FISPGHAN). *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr* 2020;70:702–10.
2. World Health Organization (WHO). Obesity and overweight. 2025.
3. UNICEF. Obesity exceeds underweight for the first time among school-age children and adolescents. 2025.