



## David Fairlamb THE FIT FACTOR

### LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Avoid any full sugar fizzy drinks from now on and teach your kids to do the same. Up to 10 teaspoons of sugar per drink is hugely damaging both in the short and long term for your health and waistline.



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**M**ORE damning statistics were revealed this week showing a record number of primary school children are leaving school severely obese, according to new figures from Public Health England. Data for 2016/17 shows one in 25, ten to eleven year olds were severely obese.

This means more than 22,000 children now end primary school severely obese, the highest level since records began.

Levels of childhood obesity have remained fairly stable in recent years, but the new analysis shows that severe obesity has been on an upward trend over the last decade. The data from the National Child Measurement Programme for children for the year 2016/17 has detailed the trends in severe obesity for the first time.

The figures also reveal:

- Boys and girls from the most deprived backgrounds are more likely to be overweight or obese and that the health inequality is growing.

- This disparity is happening at a faster rate in school leavers in year 6 than in reception age.

This once again proves that steps taken by the government are simply not strong enough and more needs to be done quickly.

The Department of Health recently

announced the second phase of its childhood obesity plan to help halve childhood obesity by 2030.

As part of that, sweets and high-fat snacks will be banned from supermarket checkouts, and there will be tighter restrictions on junk food ads on TV. This is great but how many more children's lives are going to be affected before the government realise sweeping changes need to be made quickly, rather than playing at it, which I feel has been happening for years?

Children with obesity are five times more likely to continue to be obese as adults, putting them at risk of diseases including, Type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and liver disease, as well as associated mental health conditions. Obesity is preventable and, yes the government need to do their bit, but we as parents need to be on board too.

Tips to keep your child healthier this summer:

- Avoid all sugar laden fizzy drinks, this

*Life is like riding a bike, to keep the balance you must keep moving*

hot weather is an ideal time to get them in a habit of drinking water.

- Sitting using the phone or computer doesn't mean you have to eat. Empty calories such as chocolate or crisps will soon add up. Try to limit the availability of unhealthy snacks, if they are not in the house they are less likely to eat them.

- Cereals and cereal bars are usually full of sugar, choose healthier alternatives eg porridge, eggs or fruit.

- Limit their time indoors on the computer, challenge them to walk a certain amount of steps each day, this may give them a focus and get them out the house.

- Cut the amount they eat. If you do have a pizza, one or two per person is too much. Cut down how much they have. Using a smaller plate does help.

These changes over time could make a big difference to your child's waistline and ultimately their health in years to come.



### FITNESS TIP

Over the summer try to help your children by exercising with them. Set some sort of challenge such as steps per day, or join an exercise class together. There are many parents who bring their children to our Beach Bootcamp sessions.