

3. Quick Reference to the 2023 Updated American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Guidelines

WHO All clinicians who treat children and adolescents with obesity

WHAT American Academy of Pediatrics' first comprehensive guideline on evaluating and treating children and adolescents with obesity

WHEN Released on January 9, 2023

WHERE United States

WHY More than 14.4 million U.S. children and teens live with a common chronic disease (obesity) that has been stigmatized for years and is associated with serious short- and long-term health concerns when left untreated. Clinicians have significant opportunities to address this critical health care imperative.

HOW Evidence-based practice guidelines from AAP now support the appropriate use of safe and effective obesity treatments for children in conjunction with nutrition and physical activity.

The AAP guideline contains key action statements (KAS), which represent evidence-based recommendations for evaluating and treating children with overweight and obesity and related health concerns. These recommendations include [motivational interviewing](#), intensive health behavior and lifestyle treatment, [pharmacotherapy](#) and [metabolic and bariatric surgery](#). The approach considers the child's health status, family system, community context, and resources.

Focus on the Positive

- Intensive health behavior and lifestyle treatment (IHBLT), while challenging to deliver and not universally available, is the most effective known behavioral treatment for child obesity. The most effective treatments include 26 or more hours of face-to-face, family-based, multicomponent treatment over a 3- to 12-month period.
- Evidence-based treatment delivered by trained health care professionals with active parent or caregiver involvement has no evidence of harm and can result in less disordered eating.
- As an adjunct to health behavior and lifestyle treatment, physicians should offer adolescents with obesity age 12 years and older weight loss pharmacotherapy according to medication indications, risks, and benefits.
- Teens age 13 and older with severe obesity (BMI \geq 120% of the 95th percentile for age and sex) should be evaluated for metabolic and bariatric surgery.

References

Hampel S, et al. *Pediatrics*. 2023; 151(2):e2022060640.