

Have You Helped Your Heart Today Avoid Obesity, Eat the Right Fats

Swedish scientists have discovered that children can become overweight if they don't have enough of the right kind of fat in their food. The right kind of fats can keep kids from becoming overweight.

The scientists measured the height and weight of nearly 200 healthy 4 year olds. Very few of the children were from deprived areas. They calculated their Body Mass Index (BMI). They found that 23% of the children were overweight and 2% were obese.

Children with high BMI were gaining weight because their bodies were storing too much fat, but they were not the ones eating the most fat. Children with low or ideal BMI ate more fat than those with high BMI.

The key is the amount of unsaturated fat that a child eats particularly omega-3 which is found in fatty fish and vegetables. A third of the children in the group were not eating enough unsaturated fat and the greatest deficiency was in the level of omega-3. Lead researcher and dietitian Malin Haglund Garemo said that other studies have suggested a link between the lack of omega-3 and obesity.

Another important discovery was that the children who had put on the most weight had the highest insulin levels. This was especially true of the girls.

Many of the children in the high BMI group were iron and calcium deficient. Their daily intake of fruits and vegetables was less than half the daily recommended amount. Over 25% of their daily energy was coming from soft drinks, candy or sweets.

The message is, don't cut out any one food group. Eat your carbs, proteins and fats, but eat the right ones.

Some of the foods that contain healthy fats are fish, nuts, seeds and olive oil.

For more information contact The Health Heart Program of the Columbia County Department of Health (518) 828-3358 ext 1314/15 or log on to <http://www.columbiacountynyny.com/depts/health/heart.html>