

2012 Annual public health report

All food and no play... are Haringey's children healthy?



The rising prevalence of obesity in England

● International Obesity Task Force ● National Child Measurement Programme

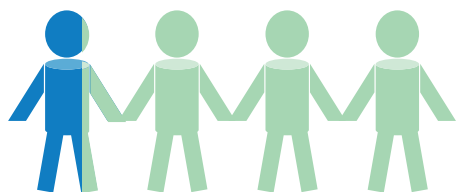


Children: all food and no play?

Things have changed a lot since the 1970s when few children were overweight. Now, many children have easy access to sugary drinks and food that is high-energy, such as fast foods and sweets.

At the same time, many are less physically active with fewer children riding bikes to school or playing games outside – watching TV and playing computer games now dominate.

Because of these changes in lifestyle, the amount of calories (energy) children eat or drink has increased dramatically, and the amount they use up has decreased. Getting this energy balance right in children is more complex than in adults because they also need energy to grow. But any excess energy becomes fat. Childhood obesity is the result of this imbalance.



Nearly 1 in 4

children are overweight or obese in reception year



Over 1 in 3

children are overweight or obese in year 6 (2013)

Why is overweight unhealthy?

Childhood obesity is a ticking health time-bomb. Overweight children are more likely to have poor self-esteem, feel depressed and be bullied. They are also at risk of becoming overweight adults. By 2050 when today's children are adults it is predicted that on current trends two-thirds of them will be very overweight (obese).

Very overweight adults will die on average nine years younger than someone of normal weight as they are very much more likely to get heart disease, cancer and diabetes. As obesity is higher in poorer areas, including many parts of the east of Haringey, this contributes to health inequalities and the marked gap in life expectancy between the east and west of the borough.

How do we get back to “normal?”

Supporting families with young children

Supporting women to breastfeed

Breast milk is the best for babies and decreases the risk of obesity in later life which is why we are helping mums to support each other to breastfeed.

Promoting a Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a nationwide government scheme which provides families on a low income with vouchers to receive fruit and vegetables, milk and vitamins. We have increased the number of places where families can get free vitamins and will continue to promote the scheme widely.

HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young)

We are delivering HENRY in Haringey to encourage families with very young children to eat a healthy diet and have a more active lifestyle. Parents can come along to a free 8-week course run in local children's centres.

Supporting school age children

Strengthening our Healthy Schools programme

Schools, where children spend most of their day, are a really important setting for supporting healthy behaviours. Our Healthy Schools programme works closely alongside the whole school community to promote healthy eating, physical activity and emotional health & wellbeing. This includes health and fitness days, various teacher training opportunities and resources that support schools to achieve their Healthy School awards.

We are developing a Healthy Schools webpage with useful resources as an additional source of support for schools. We also strongly promote the Young + Healthy App which helps signpost young people to local health & wellbeing services.



Part of our work in schools also includes advising on school meals and supporting the independent School

Food Plan, which is an action plan for schools to help them improve their meals and support their whole school approach to healthy eating, visit www.schoolfoodplan.com

“Good old fashioned” playing can also help children be active, and counts towards their recommended 60 active minutes per day, which is why Haringey council have now got a policy on Playstreets - a scheme that allows local children and families to reclaim their neighbourhoods by closing selected streets to through traffic, and turning them into temporary play streets. Haringey now has 5 official playstreets with more on the way! Visit www.haringey.gov.uk/playstreets

Let's talk about it...

Raising issues about a child's weight with their parent or carer is difficult, so we provide weight management training for a wide range of professionals to work sensitively and effectively with families.

As part of this work, we are developing a Child Obesity Pathway which will be a valuable resource in helping professionals support children, young people and families who have concerns regarding their weight.

If a parent is overweight and has poor diet and exercise habits, the child is likely to adopt the same habits. Working together as a family has been shown to be more effective for long-term adoption of healthy behaviours, which HENRY and many of our school initiatives encourage. Change4Life has lots of resources and ideas on how to get the whole family embracing a healthy lifestyle.

Promoting Change4Life in schools and the local community



All of our school and partnership work ties in with the national Change4Life campaign to promote healthy living to families and to alert partners to new national campaigns. Visit www.nhs.uk/change4life

Is overweight the new normal?
Our perceptions of obesity are also changing – a national survey found that more than half of parents couldn't identify a very overweight child.

For more information on any of these projects, please contact Debbie Arrigon, Public Health Commissioner on **020 8489 5648** or debbie.arrigon@haringey.gov.uk

How do we get back to “normal?”

Haringey – a healthy place to be

We are keen to make the healthy choice the easiest choice all over Haringey. The following all play a crucial part in helping us to get there:

Outdoor gyms

We have 18 Green Flag parks in Haringey, and Down Lane Park, Ducketts Common and Finsbury Park all now have an outside gym. Equipment is easy to use and best of all is free for everyone in the community!

Walking and Cycling

If walking and cycling are more your thing then check out www.haringey.gov.uk/smartertravel for information about activities and roadshows in the borough.

To download route maps, and discover groups for all abilities such as British Cycling’s Breeze, the biggest programme ever to get more women into riding bikes for fun, visit www.haringey.gov.uk/cycling and www.haringey.gov.uk/walking

We also provide free cycling training to anyone living or working in Haringey (aged 9 or above) – in fact we even provide free Scooter training!! And if your bike needs a little TLC, our Dr Bike maintenance sessions can help! For more information on any of these projects email smarter.travel@haringey.gov.uk or call 020 8489 5351

To help support active travel further, plans for a 20mph limit on all Haringey residential roads near schools have now been approved!

Fast food outlets

We recently worked with City University London to undertake a research study focussing on selected secondary schools and fast food outlets. We wanted to hear the voices of local children and young people, and key findings were that children’s intake of fast food and sugary soft drinks goes up when it is easily available and cheap.

We know that living in close proximity to a lot of fast food outlets can make it difficult to always choose a healthy option so we are working with local businesses on the Tottenham High Road, as part of the Healthier Catering Commitment Scheme, to help improve their availability of healthy food.

We will also be taking forward recommendations from the study with colleagues in the Council, local businesses and with schools to increase awareness and promote healthier alternatives.

