

Ohio Department of Health

246 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
www.odh.ohio.gov

Ted Strickland, Governor
Alvin D. Jackson, M.D., Director



N E W S

Office of Public Affairs
Robert Jennings, Director

For immediate release: September 15, 2010

Media Contact: Office of Public Affairs, Ohio Department of Health, (614) 644-8562

THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY MONTH

New Content Launched Through the Office of Healthy Ohio Web Site

COLUMBUS - The United States Congress proclaimed September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. To commemorate the month, the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Office of Healthy Ohio is highlighting new content and resources as well as its current initiatives through its Web site, www.healthyohioprogram.org.

"The health of a child reflects the health of the whole community," ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. said. "And while Ohio has been working hard to decrease obesity rates in both children and adults, there is still a significant amount of work to be done."

More than one-third of Ohio's children ages two years and older are either overweight or obese, and almost one in five 10 to 17 year olds are obese. Ohio has the 12th highest rate of childhood obesity.

Obesity can lead to diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Prevention and management of obesity is the most effective way to lower future medical expenses. Obesity in adults is estimated to cost Ohio approximately \$3.3 million per year in direct medical costs. Ohio spends more on obesity-related health care (more than \$400 per adult per year) than almost any other state.

Overweight or obese children often face very difficult problems, such as poor learning, bullying and teasing, lack of self-confidence, depression, back and leg pain, and poor sleep.

ODH is committed to work in all settings to improve the health of all Ohioans from the Ohio Obesity Prevention Plan's coordinated approach to improve access to healthy foods and physical activity, to the Creating Healthy Communities Program's focus on bringing community members together to decrease health risks, and to economic stimulus funding to ensure we have healthy workplaces and physical activity in afterschool programming.

Resources available at www.healthyohioprogram.org include sections on healthy nutrition, healthy activity and what parents can do.

"If you see a physician who tells you that your child is at risk for health problems due to their weight, and offers a plan to help, the only way that plan can succeed is if everyone and everything around your child is working to accomplish that goal," Dr. Jackson said.