

# OVERWEIGHT

## What Kids Say

**Dr. Robert A. Pretlow, MD, MSEE, FAAP**



## This book is dedicated...

To the hundreds of thousands of courageous kids from all over the world, who, on their own, seek help for their weight problem on the Internet and on our website. To those with the greatest measure of courage, who openly share their stories, struggles, and successes. And, to those with even a small degree of success, who become helpers to those just starting out.



# **OVERWEIGHT: What Kids Say**

## **Contents**

<b>Forward</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>iii</b>
<i>The Facts</i>	
<i>What This Book Is About</i>	
<i>Science</i>	
<i>What kids say</i>	
<b>Ch. 1 - The Childhood Obesity Epidemic</b>	<b>pp. 1</b>
<i>The Theories</i>	
<i>Thrifty gene theory</i>	
<i>Weight set point theory</i>	
<i>Low metabolism theory</i>	
<i>The food rich environment theory</i>	
<i>Sedentary lifestyle theory</i>	
<i>Other proposed causes of childhood obesity</i>	
<i>Moms are too busy to cook</i>	
<i>Poor people can't afford healthy food</i>	
<i>Kids don't know how to eat healthy</i>	
<i>Treatment</i>	
<i>Science</i>	
<i>What kids say</i>	
<b>Ch. 2 - The Internet and the Website</b>	<b>pp. 7</b>
<i>The Internet</i>	
<i>The website of this book</i>	
<i>Bulletin Boards</i>	
<i>Success Stories</i>	
<i>Chat Rooms</i>	
<i>Anonymity</i>	
<i>The information in this book</i>	
<i>Privacy</i>	
<i>Website Traffic</i>	
<i>Q &amp; A Area</i>	

*How do kids find the site?*  
*Where do kids access the site?*  
*Support Community*  
*The Website's Name*

### **Ch. 3 - The Life of an Overweight Kid**

**pp. 19**

*Appearance*

*Stretch marks*

*Saggy Skin*

*Disapproval from others*

*Physical challenges*

*Clothing is hard to find*

*Dating difficulty*

*Not fitting in desks at school*

*Frustration at failed weight loss*

*Special events*

*Other countries*

*Gainers*

*Homeschooling*

*Suicide*

*Thinner friends*

*What kids say about healthy weight kids*

*posting that they think they're overweight*

*Girls vs. Guys*

*Is there a sex difference in perspectives on weight loss?*

*The kids' perspectives*

*Comments from kids on a poll*

*Kids' misperceptions*

*Kids' questions*

*How do I lose weight?*

*How long will weight loss take?*

*Weight loss camps*

*Weight Loss Buddies*

### **Ch. 4 - Secrecy & Shame**

**pp. 51**

*Secrecy*

*Shame*

*Secrecy from friends*

*Loneliness*

*The burden of keeping weight loss a secret*

*Announced weight loss programs in school*

*Recruiting school kids for weight loss program*

*Sending letters*

*Flyers*

*Ask privately*

*Health Classes*  
*School weight screening*  
*Getting help*  
*Alone with weight problem*  
*Talked to parent or friend*  
*Talked to counselor or doctor*  
*Secrecy and shame as barriers*

**Ch. 5 – Parents** **pp. 75**

*What do overweight kids say about their parents?*  
*Can't talk to my parents*  
*Lack of support or sabotage*  
*Enabling*  
*Relationship with parents*  
*Parents as role models*  
*Foster care?*  
*Parents as barriers to weight loss*

**Ch. 6 - Health Professionals** **pp. 99**

*What do overweight kids say about their doctors?*  
*Do kids ask their healthcare providers for weight loss help?*  
*What else do overweight kids say about their doctors?*  
*Do doctors detect and advise overweight kids?*  
*Anger from kids about doctors*  
*Who should treat overweight kids?*  
*How are we going to treat all of the overweight kids?*  
*What's the take away message for health professionals?*

**Ch. 7 – Motivation** **pp. 115**

*What motivates kids to try to lose weight?*  
*What specifically motivates them?*  
*What keeps kids motivated?*

**Ch. 8 - The Struggle** **pp. 125**

*What happens when kids try to lose weight?*  
*The Struggle of Trying to Lose Weight - Step by Step*  
*1. They don't know where to start*  
*2. They feel helpless & overwhelmed*  
*3. They lack motivation*

**4. They lack control**  
- **Bingeing and bulimia and loss of control**

**5. Weight loss plateaus**

**6. Relapse**

**Cravings**  
**The struggle to stop overeating, knowing the dreadful effects of weight gain**

**Barriers to weight loss efforts**  
**Junk food**  
**Holidays**

**Healthy eating information**  
**The puzzle**

## **Ch. 9 - Comfort Eating**

**pp. 143**

**Why do overweight kids struggle?**  
**Comfort food**  
**Numbing unpleasant feelings**  
**Cravings**  
**Denial?**  
**Food is my friend**  
**Emotional eating idea may be offensive**  
**Addiction?**  
**Similar to quitting smoking**  
**Love-hate relationship with food**  
**Tolerance and overeating**  
**Overriding of satisfied feeling**  
**Keeping track of fullness**  
**Measuring**  
**Removing some pleasure from food**  
**Eating slower**  
**When do kids overeat?**  
**After school**  
**While watching TV**

**Parental divorce**  
**Two households**  
**Comfort eating tips**

**Ch. 10 - Stress Eating**

**pp. 169**

*Overeating when stressed out*  
*What kinds of stress are kids under these days?*  
*What exactly is stress?*  
*Displacement activity*  
*Nail biting and hangnail picking*  
*Binge eating*  
*Controlling stress eating and binge eating*  
*Relaxation, meditation, & deep breathing*  
*Take up a musical instrument*  
*Squeeze your hands*  
*Write down your problems*  
*Exercise as displacement activity*  
*Out of sight out of mind (Hide junk food)*  
*Chewing gum*  
*Is stress eating like an addiction?*  
*Stress relief displacement activity foods*  
*Mindless grazing*  
*Skipping breakfast*  
*Combating stress in kids*  
*Substituting low-fat foods?*

**Ch. 11 - Boredom Eating**

**pp. 187**

*What is boredom?*  
*When do kids get bored and overeat?*  
*What helps?*  
*Fun activities*  
*What's the health profession's view on emotional eating?*

**Ch. 12 – Exercise**

**pp. 197**

*Obstacles To Exercise*  
*Physical reasons*  
*Embarrassment*  
*Eating more after exercising*  
*Fun ways to exercise*  
*Dance Dance Revolution*  
*Dancing*  
*Dancing in their rooms*  
*Other fun exercise*

**Ch. 13 - Vicious Cycles**

**pp. 205**

*What are some types of overeating vicious cycles?*  
*Comfort eating*  
*Stress eating*

*Exercise vicious cycles*  
*Parental vicious cycles*  
*Dieting cycle*  
*Willpower cycle*  
*Out of control cycle*  
*Self-esteem cycle*  
*Bulimia cycle*  
*Boredom cycle*  
*Sleep deprivation vicious cycle*  
*Other Vicious Cycles*  
*Weight loss camps*  
*Home schooling*  
*Health professionals*  
*Slip ups*  
*Sitting on the sidelines*  
*Friend Food*  
*Breaking vicious cycles*  
*Distracting activities (fun things)*  
*Pets, counseling, dancing*

#### **Ch. 14 - Success Stories**

**pp. 225**

*What do kids say is the secret of successful weight loss?*  
*Exercise*  
*How do successful kids actually do it?*  
*Parents*  
*Dealing with cravings*  
*Comfort eating and stress eating*  
*Fun activities with other kids*  
*Volunteering*  
*Portion control - Just Say No!*  
*Religion*  
*Musical Instruments*  
*Support network*  
*Hang in there - it gets easier*  
*After school eating*  
*Changing a lifestyle*  
*Cutting food in half*  
*Eating in moderation*  
*Motivation*  
*Make a plan*  
*Other benefits*  
*Searching for tips*  
*Fast food and junk food*  
*Other books and programs*  
*Accountability*



## **Testimonials**

### **Ch. 15 - Where Do We Go From Here?**

**pp. 269**

***What is it that kids actually are hooked on?***

***Comfort eating***

***Stress eating and displacement activity***

***Boredom eating***

***Pacifier effect***

***When does it start?***

***Why now?***

***A Perfect Storm***

***1) High tech, cheap, widely available,  
high pleasure food – industrialization &  
food science***

***2) Junk food availability***

***3) Fast food availability***

***4) Comfort Food industry***

***5) Increased stress in kids and using  
food to cope***

***6) Kids are less active***

***Are food companies 'feeding' food dependence?***

***How then can kids lose weight?***

***1) Develop motivation***

***2) Make a plan***

***3) Arrange support persons***

***4) Eliminate, hide, and stay away from  
tempting foods***

***Gradual method for kids to lose weight***

***(removing the culprit one by one)***

***Withdrawal cycling***

***Knowledge about healthy eating is not enough***

***Public Policy***

***1) Evaluate limiting exposure and access by  
kids to junk food and fast food***

***2) Focus on the reasons kids overeat***

***3) Address the reasons for the adult obesity  
epidemic***

***4) Design weight loss programs to be more  
like addiction medicine programs***

***Out of the Mouths of Babes***

## **References**

**pp. 303**