New User? Register | Sign In | Help Trending: Bret Michaels Yahoo! Mail

YAHOO! HEALTH Search Web Search

Flash

HOME DRUGS HEALTH NEWS
EVERYDAY WELLNESS DIET & FITNESS MIND & MOOD LONGEVITY CONDITIONS & DISEASES

SEARCH YAHOO! HEALTH FOR: Search Health Site Map

Bullies Target Obese Kids

By Serena Gordon, HealthDay Reporter - Mon May 3, 8:49 PM PDT

- MONDAY, May 3 (HealthDay News) -- For kids, a few extra pounds may invite trouble from the schoolyard bully.

Understanding Weight in Children

RELATED ARTICLES
- Vaccine may trigger early start of infant epilepsy (Reuters)
- Health Tip: Keep Your Child Safe in the Backyard (HealthDay)
- Best Children's Hospitals

ALL RELATED ARTICLES »
CHILDREN HOME »

RELATED TOPICS
- ADHD & ADD
- First Aid & Safety
- Parenting

Did you find this helpful?
Rate this story:
41% of users found this article helpful.

New research suggests that just being overweight increases the risk of being bullied. And factors that usually play a role in the risk of being bullied, such as gender, race and family income levels, don't seem to matter if you're overweight -- being overweight or obese trumps all those other factors when it comes to aggressive behavior from other children.

The study found that being overweight increased the risk of being the target of bullying by 63 percent.

"One of the reasons we started this study is that obesity is so much more common today. Now that about half of kids are overweight or obese, it doesn't make you such an outlier anymore, so we thought maybe kids wouldn't be bullied for being overweight anymore," said study author Dr. Julie Lumeng, an assistant research scientist at the Center for Human Growth and Development at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She added that the researchers also hoped they might be able to find some protective factors against being bullied, such as doing well in school.

"What we found, much to our dismay, was that nothing seemed to matter. If you were obese, you were more likely to be bullied, no matter what," she said.

Results of the study will be published in the June issue of *Pediatrics*, but were released online May 3.

The study included 821 boys and girls from a nationally representative sample of children selected from 10 sites around the United States. Bullying behaviors were assessed in third, fifth and sixth grades. The youngsters were mostly white, half of them were male and 15 percent were overweight in the third grade.

By sixth grade, teachers reported that 34 percent of the study children had been bullied, and mothers reported that 45 percent of the children had been bullied, while 25 percent of the children themselves said they had been bullied.

Previous research has shown that boys, minorities and children from low-income groups are more likely to be bullied, so the researchers took these factors into account to see if they made a difference. The study authors also considered a child's social skills and academic achievement in their analysis.

"No matter how much we retested, the findings were very robust. Obese kids are more likely to be bullied," said Lumeng.

She said that one of the reasons she believes the findings were so consistent is that prejudice against overweight or obese people is "so pervasive that it's acceptable." But, she added, "Obesity is really complex. It's not all about willpower. It's a brain-based disorder, and I hope that message becomes clearer."

Dana Rofey, an assistant professor with the Weight Management and Wellness Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, said she wasn't surprised by the findings. "Bullying is the most common psychosocial complaint that our patients present with," she said.

"For parents and pediatricians, one of the issues our study raises is that if you're caring for a child who's overweight, you need to be alert to this and you might want to gently bring it up with the child. Ask, 'How are things at school going?' or 'Does anyone ever say something that makes you feel bad?' because this may be an issue that's difficult for kids to bring up," said Lumeng.

If your child lets you know that he or she is being bullied, Lumeng said your first response should be to validate your child's feelings and let them know that it's not OK for someone to treat them like that.

What to do next can be tricky, agreed both experts.

"Be supportive, and let your child know that you'll help them. Consult with your child and ask how he or she would like you to get involved," advised Rofey. Many youngsters may ask their parents to take a hands-off approach, she said. But she recommends setting some guidelines. "Say something like, 'It seems you have this under control right now, but let's keep talking and checking in about it.'"

Rofey also recommends teaching your child how to avoid situations that might lead to teasing or bullying, and talking with your child about how to reach out to adults if they need to. Depending on the situation, she said that parents may need to step in and advocate for their children at the school. But, she advised always letting your children know what steps you'll be taking.

More information

The Nemours Foundation KidsHealth Web site has more tips for kids on dealing with bullies.

Further Reading

CHILDREN HOME »

Recent News
- Many don't seek prompt help after 'mini-stroke' (Reuters)
- Study: Stomach cancer up in young, white adults (AP)
- Aspirin May Increase Risk of Crohn's Disease (HealthDay)
- Health Tip: When to See a Doctor for a Knee Injury (HealthDay)
- Health Tip: Keep Your Child Safe in the Backyard (HealthDay)

ALL RECENT NEWS »

Discover Related Topics:
- ADHD & ADD
- First Aid & Safety
- Parenting

EMAIL PRINT IM BUZZ UP!

Syndication: digg del.icio.us Stumble Technorati

ADVERTISEMENT

Flash

Health Resources

LATEST NEWS
Many don't seek prompt help after 'mini-...
Study: Stomach cancer up in young, white...
Aspirin May Increase Risk of Crohn's Dis...
Health Tip: When to See a Doctor for a K...
Health Tip: Keep Your Child Safe in the ...
ALL LATEST HEALTH NEWS »

2010 WEBBY AWARDS VOTE FOR YOU
IT'S YOUR TURN TO SPEAK UP. VOTE FOR PRIMETIME IN NO TIME FOR A WEBBY AWARD
YAHOO! TV Vote Now

SPONSORED LINKS
Bully Sticks at Wholesale Prices
Bully Sticks at Wholesale prices 12"-$2.09, 6"-0.94, Flossies $2.49.
www.e-petsboutique.com
Free Mothers Day E Cards
Send a free Mother's Day ecard today. 1000's of free ecards.
MothersDay.OccasionalECards.com
Bully Dog Propane
Buy premium Bully Dog products. Next-day shipping available. Order now.
www.xtremediesel.com
Hotels in Champaign
Find Hotel Rooms In IL. Search Your Listings At Local.com.
Hotels.Local.com

SEARCH YAHOO! HEALTH FOR: Search Health

HEALTH HOME HEALTH NEWS BULLIES TARGET OBESE KIDS (HEALTHDAY)

Elsewhere on Yahoo! Health

Exercise

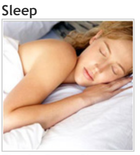
Instant Ab Flatteners

Cold or Flu

Cold or Flu?

Mind & Mood

7 Ways to Lift a Bad Mood

Sleep

Tips for Better Sleep

Things You Can Do
Help us improve Yahoo! Health
Send Your feedback

Also on Yahoo!
- Real Estate
- Autos
- Travel
- HotJobs
- Shopping
- Maps
- Shine
- Local
- Sports
- OMG

Copyright © 2010 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved. **Terms of Service** | **Copyright/IP Policy** | **Help**

NOTICE: We collect personal information on this site. To learn more about how we use your information, see our **Privacy Policy** | **About Our Ads**.

This site and its services, including the information above, are for informational purposes only and are not a substitute for professional medical or health advice, examination, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health professional before starting any new treatment, making any changes to existing treatment, or altering in any way your current exercise or diet regimen. Do not delay seeking or disregard medical advice based on information on this site. Medical information changes rapidly and while Yahoo! and its content providers make efforts to update the content on the site, some information may be out of date. No health information on Yahoo!, including information about herbal therapies and other dietary supplements, is regulated or evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and therefore the information should not be used to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease without the supervision of a medical doctor.