FACT SHEET

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ADOLESCENT OBESITY AND BARIATRIC SURGERY

PREVALENCE OF OBESITY IN ADOLESCENTS

- Obesity is a serious health condition; as of 2007, 32% of children aged 10-17 in the U.S. are overweight and 16% are obese, childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years.

- Without intervention, extremely obese children may continue to suffer from obesity as adults. Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults and an 80% chance if a parent is overweight or obese.
  - Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) study found about half of obese teenage girls and a third of obese teenage boys become severely obese by the time they are 30.
  - 1 in 12 teenagers become severely obese, or 100 pounds above their ideal weight, as they enter adulthood.

- Obesity may be more prevalent among minority populations; 6% of African-American, 5% of Mexican-American and 3% of Caucasian children and adolescents are considered obese.

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH OBESITY IN ADOLESCENTS

- 2010 New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) study suggests obese adolescents are more than twice as likely than non-obese adolescents to die prematurely, before age 55, of illness or self-inflicted injury.

- Without major lifestyle changes, obese children may face a 10-20 year shorter life span and may develop health problems in their twenties that are typically seen in 40-60 year-olds.

- 2010 Journal of Pediatrics study finds nearly two-thirds of morbidly obese children have 2 or more cardiovascular risk factors and a substantial proportion have significant co-morbidities typically seen in adults, including obstructive sleep apnea, type 2 diabetes, severe depression, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, significant hypertension and an enlarged heart.

- A study of 5- to 17-year-olds found that 70% of obese children had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease and 39% of obese children had at least two risk factors.

- Among morbidly obese adolescents ages 15-17, 83% had elevated C-Reactive Protein levels, a blood marker for inflammation that in adults is considered an early warning sign for possible future heart disease, compared to 18% of healthy weight adolescents.

IMPACT OF BARIATRIC SURGERY ON ADOLESCENTS

- Studies suggest bariatric surgery should be considered for adolescents with BMI > 40 or ≥35 with serious co-morbid conditions.

- Bariatric surgery in adolescents with morbid obesity is shown to be more effective for losing weight than diet and exercise alone; a 2010 Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) study found teens fitted with gastric bands had an average of nearly 80% excess weight loss, while diet and exercise group lost an average of 13% excess weight.
• Studies show that surgery may also be an effective tool for resolving or improving co-morbid conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome and in adolescents
  o Patients in a 2010 JAMA study showed improvements in physical functioning, general health, self-esteem and family activities
• 2010 Journal of Pediatrics study on the importance of early medical intervention to treat morbid obesity, found with earlier surgical intervention, adolescents may have a greater chance of reversing the effects of obesity

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