

# A systems approach to preventing obesity in early life

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Childhood Obesity is a bimonthly journal, published in print and online, and the journal of record for all aspects of communication on the broad spectrum of issues and strategies related to weight management and obesity prevention in children and adolescents. Credit: ©2012 Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

Currently more than 10% of preschoolers in the U.S. are obese and effective strategies that target pregnancy, infancy, and toddlers are urgently needed to stop the progression of the childhood obesity epidemic, as proposed in an article in *Childhood Obesity*, a peer-reviewed journal from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers.

Evidence increasingly suggests that the risk for [childhood obesity](#) begins

before and during pregnancy via maternal obesity and excessive gestational weight gain. It is likely that obese preschoolers will continue to be obese later in childhood and they may begin to exhibit adverse effects of obesity as early as 3 years of age.

Based on their review of the evidence from basic science, prevention, and systems research, the authors propose a systems approach to preventing childhood obesity that begins in pregnancy, continues through early life, and combines [behavior change](#) interventions with the implementation of environmental changes in communities.

Philip Nader, MD, University of California, San Diego (La Jolla, CA), and colleagues from University of Nebraska Medical Center (Omaha, NE), University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine (Philadelphia, PA), The Brookings Institution (Washington, DC), and Northwestern University (Chicago, IL), discuss their early life systems-oriented [obesity prevention](#) strategy in the article "Next Steps in Obesity Prevention: Altering [Early Life](#) Systems To Support Healthy Parents, Infants, and Toddlers."

"A great many forces conspire to produce epidemic obesity, in children and adults alike. Indeed, almost everything that makes modern living 'modern' is obesigenic. It will take an equal, or greater, opposing force to turn this tide and Dr. Nader and colleagues characterize this force artfully and convincingly. They show how we can – and should – apply a systems approach to obesity prevention and control that spans the lifespan and begins even before birth (so-called 'primordial prevention'). This is not just a very important article that we are delighted to publish - it is a clarion call, and blueprint, for effective action," says David L. Katz, MD, MPH, Editor-in-Chief of *Childhood Obesity*, and Director of Yale University's Prevention Research Center.

**More information:** The article is available free online ahead of print

on the *Childhood Obesity* website at <http://www.liebertpub.com/chi>.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

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