

*Vietnam has seen a sharp rise in the rate of obese children, particularly in big cities like HCM City where the number of overweight children under five is 9.6%.*



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Nguyen Thi Thu Mai, 3 years old, in Ha Tinh Province weighs 25 kilos but is just 95cm tall. She is five kilos heavier than the average, however, her height is 1-2cm taller than average. Her mother has never controlled her diet and still lets her eat her favourite starch-rich food. According to the mother, her weight will normalise when she enters a pre-school.”

Associate. Pro. Dr. Le Thi Bach Mai, Deputy Head of the National Institution of Nutrition, said many parents take their children to the hospital with the expectation that doctors will give them some kind of tonic to make them fatter though their children already meet height and weight standards. Lots of parents don't recognise that their children are obese.

A survey in Hanoi showed that up to 53% of parents whose children are overweight don't see that their children have a weight problem.

“A study conducted at Hai Ba Trung Primary School indicated that up to 60% of obese children

in the school are on the verge of a lipid disorder in the blood. If obesity is not controlled children's health is in great danger. They will definitely face the risk of heart disease, diabetes and metabolic disorders, Associate Prof. Mai added.

Dr. Trinh Hong Son, of the National Institute of Nutrition, said Vietnam has seen a sharp rise in the rate of obese children, particularly in big cities. In 2010, the rate of under-five obese children increased to 5.6%, up from only 0.62% in 2009. In HCM City the number of overweight children is at 9.6% compared to the average world level of 6.9%.

In the five big cities of Hanoi, HCM City, Danang, Can Tho and Haiphong, the rate is 6% out of a total of 86,000 children under five.

Associate Prof. Mai said urban children tend to eat more protein, sugar and lipids, but their food lacks vital vitamins and minerals.

According to a world nutrition survey on 7.68 million children under five, 1.2 million have substandard weight while 2 million are malnourished. Meanwhile, the incidence of obesity in children has continued to rise, especially between 2000 and 2010. In addition Vietnam has seen a rise of 1cm in people's average height over that same period.

The Ministry of Health will launch National Nutrition Week on October 16-23 with the theme "Ensuring nutrition security and food safety for good health."

The event will focus on encouraging people to select food based on nutrition and safety.

*Source: Dtinews*