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Childhood Obesity Linked to Harmful Western Diet

(Ivanhoe Newswire) -- High-calorie, low-fiber foods are making kids fat by creating a hormonal imbalance that encourages them to overeat, according to a new review of obesity research published this week.

The amount of overweight adolescents has doubled in the last 30 years. Pediatric endocrinologist Robert Lustig, M.D., from the University of California, San Francisco, Children's Hospital blames the Western diet.

Dr. Lustig is a professor of clinical pediatrics and says Western food has taken on an "insulinogenic" atmosphere, marked by too much fructose consumption and too little fiber consumption.

Insulin decreases the activity of a hormone called leptin, which regulates appetite, increases physical activity, and contributes to a general feeling of health. Dr. Lustig reports when kids are in a state of leptin resistance they eat more food and are less active

Dr. Lustig says the problem is not that kids are choosing to eat poorly, it's that parents and schools are presenting poor choices to the children.

"Young children are not responsible for food choices at home or at school, and it can hardly be said that preschool children, in who obesity is rampant, are in a position to accept personal responsibility," reports Dr. Lustig.

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