

South Georgia's #1 News Source



Childhood obesity continues to climb

Feb 16, 2005, 4:34 PM



Valdosta - Children have always been told to eat their fruits and vegetables, and following that advice has never been more important than it is today. "The children need to learn how to eat properly while they're young and it will stick with them for life," said Beth Flesher, School Nutrition Director.

About 15 percent of children in the United States are obese, and most all of those grow into overweight adults. Health care professionals are learning how to combat the obesity epidemic at the South Health District's Obesity Summit. "We're telling them that prevention is real and it works, the information is available and they're going to have to be active and aggressive," said Peter Townsley.

And the best place to start is in schools. This is the one place kids are guaranteed their daily dose of nutrition. "We're increasing our fruits and vegetables and looking at increasing our fiber content," said Flesher.

But their eating habits aren't always the same at home. "Kids can learn it in schools and take it home to their parents," said Townsley.

Many schools in South Georgia are developing wellness plans to teach students more about nutrition in the classroom and regulate the kinds of food they're allowed at break times. "That includes everything from classroom parties to what's in the snack machines," said Flesher.

And teaching them the right foods to eat today will make all the difference when it comes to their tomorrow.

posted by ashley.harper@walb.com

