



Start early: Prevention begins in childhood

Primary care



- Encourage exclusive **breastfeeding** for the first 6 months of life.
- Provide **nutrition and exercise guidance before and during pregnancy** to enhance health literacy, diet, and physical activity.
- Promote the adoption and/or uptake of **clinical practice guidelines** and **continuous education programmes** for healthcare professionals to provide effective **obesity care** and **obesity prevention**.

Education



- Establish **comprehensive school programmes starting in primary school** encompassing quality physical education, adequate facilities, and inclusive physical activity initiatives for all students.
- Introduce **nutrition education** across various settings, such as preschools and schools, to increase the understanding of nutrition labels, boost fruit and vegetable consumption, and to avoid high intake of physiologically unfavourable nutrients and generally an unbalanced nutrition.

Community



- Launch **mass media campaigns promoting healthy diets** with a focus on reducing fats, sugars, and salt while boosting fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Promote **active transportation** by creating safe footpaths, cycle lanes, and supervised walks to school for groups of local schoolchildren.

National policy



- Limit the **advertising of unhealthy food and beverages** including alcohol on TV, radio, cinemas, and digital platforms like social media and video sharing sites.
- Create **healthy school food environments** by banning ultra-processed food and sugar-sweetened beverages in schools.
- Develop a **national prevention strategy on obesity**.

Research



- Conduct research on **children's dietary patterns** to inform policy.
- Allocate research and development funding to study the **links between early-life nutrition and disease in adulthood**, create innovative **obesity prevention** and **treatment solutions**.

This paper has been produced by United European Gastroenterology (UEG) in January 2024. UEG is a professional non-profit organisation combining all the leading European medical specialists and national societies focusing on digestive health. For more information visit www.ueg.eu.

Resources

1. WHO (2022) European Regional Obesity Report, Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe ([accessible here](#))
2. UEG (2022) Position Paper on Obesity and Digestive Health ([accessible here](#))
3. EASL-Lancet Commission Report (2021) Protecting the next generation of Europeans against liver disease complications and premature mortality ([accessible here](#))
4. WHO (2013) Global Action Plan on NCDs 2013-2020 ([accessible here](#))