

# ACTIVE

- 1) General introduction on children and obesity
- 2) the situation of obesity in project countries
- 3) EU policy

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Content Workshop

The views expressed in this presentation are purely the authors' own and do not reflect the views of the European Commission.



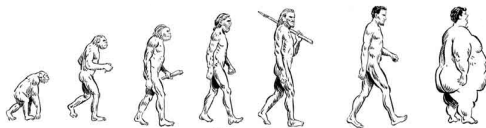
## General introduction about childhood obesity



...Children are fat because they eat too much and they move not enough... it sounds too easy, isn't it??



Nowadays there is a tendency to consider overweight/obesity as a multifactorial condition, come out from the interaction among GENETIC and epigenetic factors (i.e. ENVIRONMENTAL, METABOLIC AND BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS)



The current demographic shift towards a high prevalence of overweight in western population in a relatively short time (one or two generations) is likely due to environmental causes (change in nutrition and in life style)

## Nutrition?

It is often said that the rising prevalence of childhood obesity is linked to a larger caloric assumption. Actually this is not completely true, because there has not been any increase in caloric intake in the last three decades (Rogalusa, Heart Study and NANHES)

Thus far excessive **FAT INTAKE** was on trail against obesity. Actually fats cannot be responsible for obesity epidemic in USA because fat consumption is drastically falling down in the last decades.



the right question: HOW MANY FATS? WHICH FAT?

↓ FAT INTAKE



↑ SWEETS/  
CARBOHYDRATES  
INTAKE

↑ specially high glicemic index food



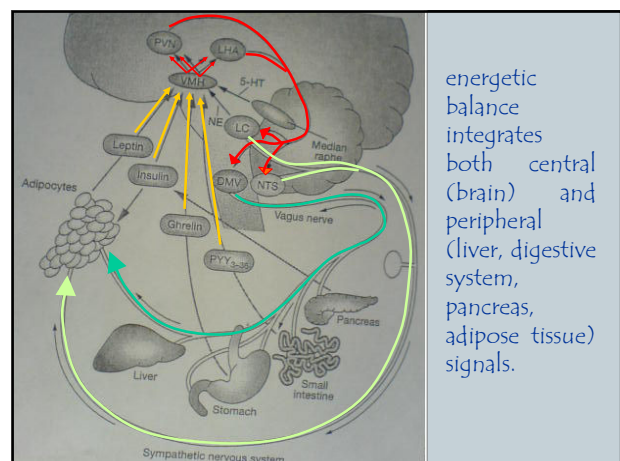
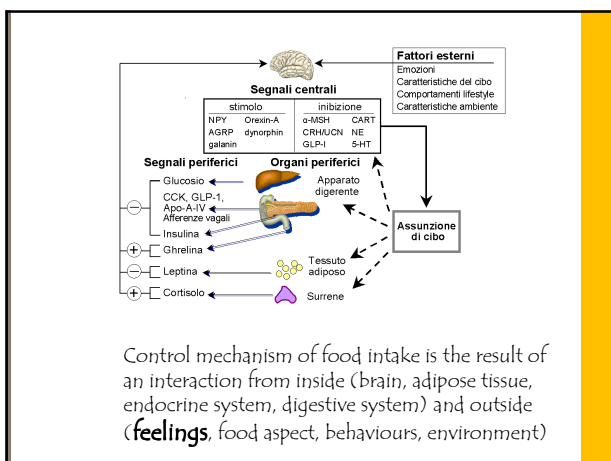
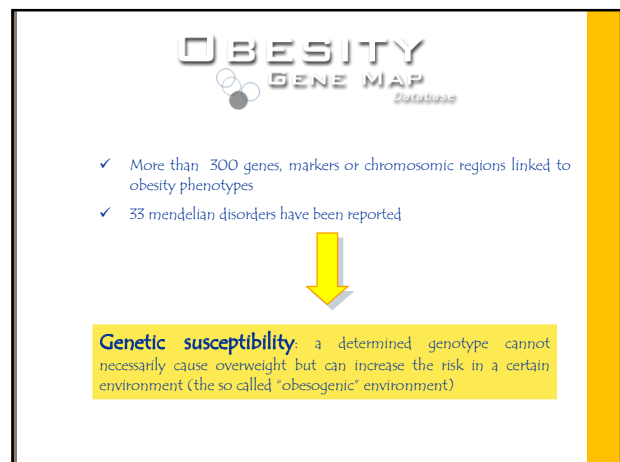
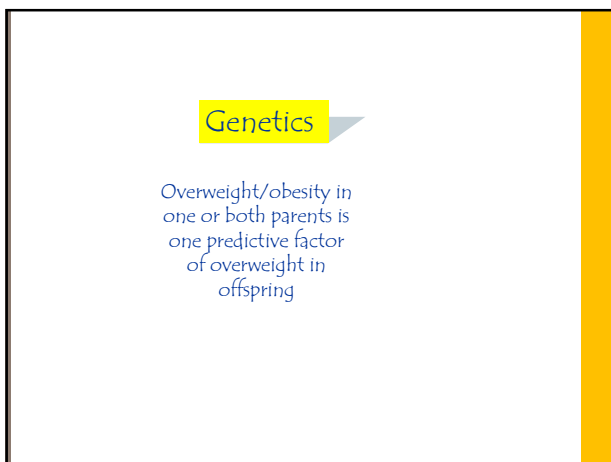
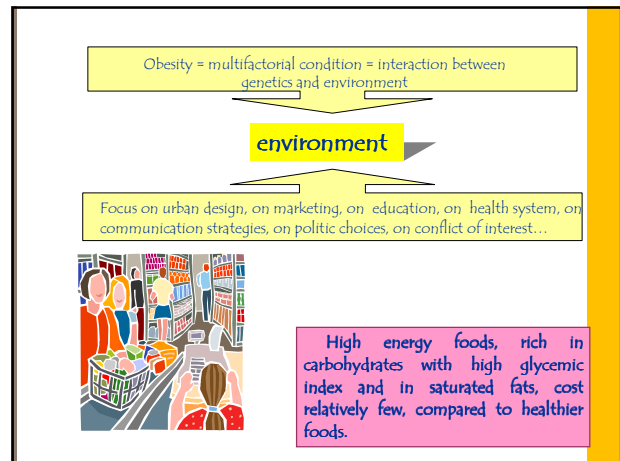
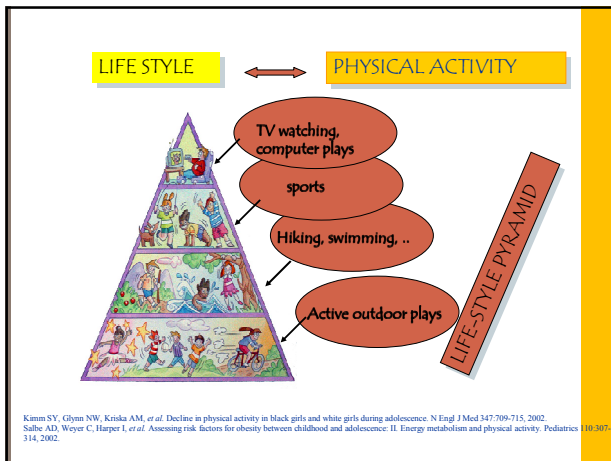
(a soft drink contains on average 4-5 spoons of sugar!!)

unhealthy diet

adverse health consequences

It may result from:  
excessive intake of soda and sweetened beverages;  
fast-food consumption;  
inadequate intakes of fresh fruits, vegetables, fiberrichfoods, and dairy and other calcium-rich foods;

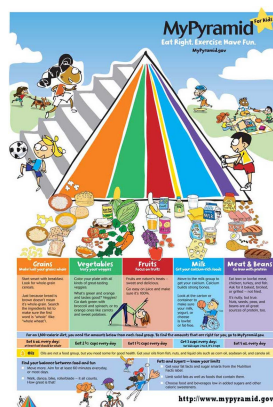
increasing obesity rates indicate a need to revisit the diet and lifestyle characteristics of children and adolescent



### The Energy Balance Equation

$$\text{Dietary Intake} - \text{Energy Expenditure} = \text{Stores}$$

(What you got - What you spent = What's Left)



In conclusion..

Nowadays healthy diet  
AND movement are  
considered both  
essential in the fight  
against GLOBESITY



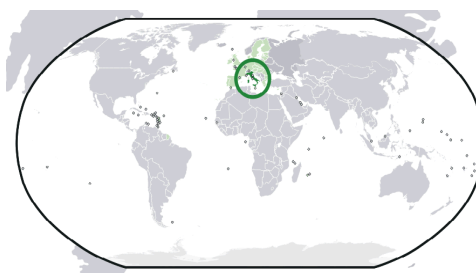
### 2) the situation of obesity in project countries

The World Health Organization describes obesity as 'one of today's most public health problems' and further comments that an 'escalating global epidemic of overweight and obesity is taking over many parts of the world'

Of even more concern is the increased prevalence of overweight and obesity (OW/OB) among children and adolescents.

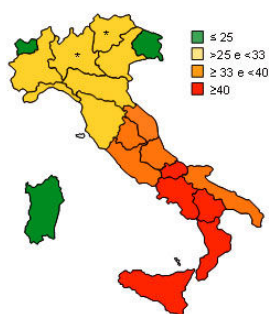
World-wide, about 10% of school-aged children and adolescents are overweight or obese, with very high rates being seen in the Americas, Europe (WHO: 20% OW/OB children) and even the Middle East.

It is an ironic and rather sad fact that the two major nutritional problems that presently face the world are obesity and starvation (about 600 million people face severe energy shortage and starvation).



- ◊ In recent years, the problem has gained the full attention of health care professionals, health policy experts, children's advocates
- ◊ In Europe, the necessity of a periodic monitoring of the condition in children and adolescent has recently raised (strongly motivated from the increased perception of children OW/OB as a priority of the European public health).

### OW/OB IN ITALY (BY REGION) from OKKIO study



Over 40% in South Italy regions

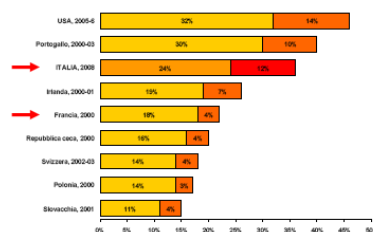
33-40% in Centre Italy regions

Lower prevalence in North Italy regions

24%  
12%  
Overweight  
Obese

data kindly provided by the project "OKKIO ALLA SALUTE" Italian version of European project Gaining Health: The European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases

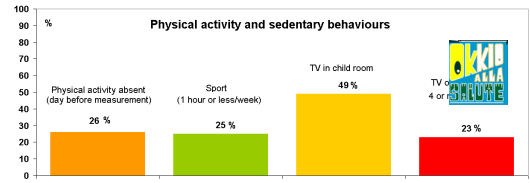
### INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON (FEW AND SPARSE DATA AVAILABLE)



WHO Europe is now performing a study in 15 European countries using the same methodology (very similar to that employed by OKKio)

### Behaviour and social aspects of eating from OKKIO study

- ✓ 11% = skip breakfast
- ✓ 23% = do not eat fruit and vegetables
- ✓ 82% = plentiful mid-morning snack
- ✓ School nutrition education programs are performed in 79% of the classes
- ✓ School physical activity promotion initiatives are present in 90% of the classes
- ✓ About 30% of mothers with a full-time work
- ✓ 4 out of 10 mothers of OW/OB children do not think that their sons weight is excessive



data referred to Liguria (Italy) as preliminary results of the project "OKKIO ALLA SALUTE" Italian version of European project **Gaining Health: The European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases**

### 3) EU policy



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 30.5.2007  
COM(2007) 279 final

#### WHITE PAPER ON

A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues

{SEC(2007) 706}  
{SEC(2007) 707}

The White Paper promotes several actions relate directly to the functioning of the **internal market** (such as labelling requirements, health claims authorisations and food controls procedures) while others are part of more **specific frameworks** such as the Common Agricultural Policy (though the CMO for fruit and vegetables), Commission initiatives in the field of education, regional policy (structural funds) and last but not least **audiovisual and media policy**.

"one set of co-ordinated actions at the EU level is considered preferable to numerous, individual actions at Member State level"

**Firstly**, actions should aim to address the root causes of the health related risks. In this way, the actions set out in the strategy should contribute to reducing all risks associated with poor diet and limited physical activity including that associated with excess weight.

**Secondly**, the actions described are intended to work across government policy areas and at different levels of government using a range of instruments including legislation, networking, public-private approaches, and to engage the private sector and civil society.

**Thirdly** the strategy will require action from a wide range of private actors, such as the food industry and civil society, and actors at local level, such as schools and community organisations.

**Finally**, and perhaps most importantly, monitoring will be essential over the coming years. The number of activities aimed at improving diet and physical activity is already extensive and is growing year by year. There is often little or no monitoring taking place, resulting in limited assessment of what is working well, or whether actions need to be refined or fundamentally changed.

**Making the healthy option available**

**Better informed consumers**



**EU policy in 4 items:**

**Encouraging physical activity**

**Developing a picture of good and best practice**

# Thank you!

*This presentation arises from the project ACTIVE which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme*

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