**BBC WORDS IN THE NEWS: OBESITY EPIDEMIC**

**20 February 2008**

*The world needs to tackle the growing epidemic of obesity with the same sense of global urgency as climate change. The head of the international obesity taskforce, Professor Philip James, said that we needed greater political leadership at the international level. This report from Matt McGrath:*

The scale of the **obesity epidemic** is such that the world needs **a global pact** on the best ways to tackle it. At present, according to Professor Philip James, an expert on **nutrition**, **obese** **children outnumber the malnourished by two to one**. This worldwide weight gain is **sparking a marked rise** in some diseases - the number of people with type two **diabetes** is expected to double to 366 million by 2030.

According to Professor James, **there is no point in blaming individuals** for being overweight - we need real political leadership to change the environment that is rapidly making the world fat. The fat content of food needs to be **labelled clearly**, advertisers must be prevented from targeting children and governments must encourage people **to get out of their cars**.

Professor James also said that new data from Scandinavia indicates that the weight of a child at the age of 7 to12 **predicts whether or not** they are going to die early from heart disease or other problems.

**VOCABULARY BANK**

**obesity epidemic**

fatness problem that seriously affects a lot of people at the same time

**a global pact**

an agreement by all the governments in the world

**nutrition**

scientific study of food

**obese children outnumber the malnourished by two to one**

for every one child who doesn't have enough to eat in the world, there are two fat ones

**sparking a marked rise**

making a sharp increase happen

**diabetes**

a disease in which the body cannot control the level of sugar in the blood

**there is no point in blaming individuals**

it is useless saying that people are at fault or are responsible for

**labelled clearly**

written in plain, simple clear language

**to get out of their cars**

to use their cars less (for example, to walk or cycle more)

**predicts whether or not**

tells if in the future something will happen or not

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**Are the following sentences true or false?**

1. There needs to be a worldwide answer to the current problems of fatness. T/F

2. There are more children in the world who don't have enough to eat than there are those who eat too much. T/F

3. There has been a sharp increase recently in the number of people affected by illnesses associated with being overweight. T/F

4. Professor James says it's important that people take responsibility themselves if they are fat. T/F

5. Professor James says governments should encourage people to exercise more. T/F

6. Professor James said that Scandinavian research shows that you can tell from children's weight if they will have heart problems when they are older. T/F

**WRITING TASK**

Design a leaflet for people your age with hints and tips to lead a healthy lifestyle. Some ideas you could include could be

* Eat less
* Exercise more
* Cycle to work or school
* Use the stairs rather than lifts
* Drink water rather than sugary drinks

**VOCABULARY**

**Match these words and phrases to their definitions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
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| **a global pact** |  | making a sharp increase happen |
| **Nutrition** |  | an agreement by all the governments in the world |
| **obese children outnumber the malnourished by two to one** |  | tells if in the future something will happen or not |
| **sparking a marked****rise** |  | a disease in which the body cannot control the levelof sugar in the blood |
| **Diabetes** |  | written in plain, simple clear language |
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| **to get out of their****cars** |  | scientific study of food |
| **predicts whether or****not** |  | to use their cars less (for example, to walk or cyclemore) |