



## FIGHT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

By Judith Riddle

Where did the summer go? It's November already! The leaves on the trees have long turned dazzling hues of red, orange, yellow, and crimson. And the Thanksgiving holiday is just a few weeks away—a festive time of family celebrations punctuated with delicious comfort foods and decadent desserts.

If clients are trying to watch their waistlines, this time of year will be (as always) an especially difficult time to do so. With all the scrumptious goodies floating around, it will be almost impossible not to overindulge. An extra helping of cornbread stuffing, two more forkfuls of macaroni and cheese, one more slice of apple pie a la mode topped with whipped cream, and before they know it they've gained 5 lbs—and so have their children.

And if their kids already have been battling obesity throughout the year, the calorie-laden fare may continue to set the stage for ill health down the road if they don't adopt more healthful eating habits. Unfortunately, this is the case for many youths, as overweight and obesity are at an all-time high.

More than 20 million U.S. children and teens are overweight or obese. And over the past four decades, the prevalence of obesity has almost doubled among U.S. preschoolers and teens

and tripled among children aged 6 to 11.

Not a pretty picture.

In our cover story, "Healthful Holiday Treats," on page 22, *Today's Dietitian* spoke with several experts in the dietetics field about the prevalence of this growing but troublesome trend. The good news is that these experts offer 10 proven strategies you can share with clients to help them shave unwanted calories from traditional Thanksgiving meals and desserts without sacrificing taste, plus ways to stay active during this holiday season. In addition, we provide healthful dessert recipes kids will enjoy.

Our feature article "Stop Diabetes in Its Tracks" discusses the prevalence of prediabetes, a disease state during which patients have slightly elevated blood glucose levels but not high enough to be diagnosed with full-blown diabetes. Experts say the sooner patients are diagnosed with this condition, the greater their chances of reversing it—and RDs/CDEs can play an instrumental role.

To better counsel celiac disease and gluten-sensitive clients, read "A Bounty of Alternative Whole Grains" to find out more about the most common alternative grains available; the plethora of food products patients can eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as online resources.

Enjoy the issue!

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