

press release

Novo Nordisk and UNICEF to extend joint initiative to prevent global childhood obesity

New York and Bagsværd, 20 September 2023 – Novo Nordisk and UNICEF today announced an extension of their long-term partnership to help prevent global childhood overweight and obesity - a public health crisis that affects millions of children worldwide.

Over the next three years Novo Nordisk will commit 8 million US dollars to scale and accelerate efforts to create healthier environments for children through policy implementation and innovations that enable children to eat well, play and be physically active. The aim is to positively impact at least 10 million children.

With the intention to share best practices, knowledge and tools globally, the partnership is intensifying its efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean and expanding to the East Asia and the Pacific region with deeper work in Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and Indonesia.

“Childhood obesity prevention is critical as the current trajectory for obesity is unsustainable, placing increased pressure on countries across the world,” said Katrine DiBona, corporate vice president for Global Public Affairs & Sustainability at Novo Nordisk. “UNICEF and Novo Nordisk believe that preventing childhood obesity is a shared societal responsibility that requires systemic change. With the expansion of our partnership, we are excited to continue our work to build healthy environments that enable and empower children to thrive.”

Since launching in 2019, the partnership has been at the forefront of driving systemic changes to prevent childhood overweight and obesity, positively impacting the lives of more than 2.6 million children and caregivers across Latin America and the Caribbean through direct programmatic interventions. Additionally, the partnership has also played a crucial role in enhancing legislation in Mexico and Colombia, ensuring greater protection, promotion, and support for child nutrition and health.

“The continuation of our partnership with Novo Nordisk supports our global prevention agenda to tackle the escalating prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity. We aim to accelerate

efforts in preventing childhood overweight and obesity through systemic action in policies, programmes and practices that will have a profound impact on the nutrition, growth and development of millions of children,” said Victor Aguayo, Director of Nutrition and Child Development at UNICEF.

Building upon insights gained during the past three years, Novo Nordisk and UNICEF will focus specifically on improving the food and urban systems that often dictate the health and well-being of children. The partnership aims to support more local and national governments to implement sustainable policy change to improve children’s access to nutritious, safe, affordable diets as well as opportunities to be physically active. To do so, the partnership will continue to create evidence to enhance knowledge among decision makers and advocate to shift the narrative on childhood overweight and obesity away from individual blame and towards the structural drivers.

Concrete local activities will:

- Advocate for school food environment regulations in Brazil that prohibit the sale or promotion of harmful ultra-processed food products.
- Design innovations to monitor the improved regulation of unhealthy food marketing directed at children online in Mexico.
- Pilot innovative interventions to improve urban food retail environments in Indonesia.
- Strengthen nutrition labelling regulations in Colombia.

Overweight and obesity affect around 40 million children under 5 globally, and an additional 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19. Alarming, approximately three quarters of affected children reside in low- and middle-income countries.¹ The Latin America & the Caribbean and East Asia & the Pacific regions alone are home to nearly half of the world’s children under the age of five living with overweight or obesity.

About Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company, founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark. The company’s purpose is to drive change to defeat serious chronic diseases, built upon its heritage in diabetes. It does so by pioneering scientific breakthroughs, expanding access to its medicines, and working to prevent and ultimately cure disease. Novo Nordisk employs about 59,000 people in 80 countries and markets its products in around 170 countries.

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. UNICEF

¹ World Health Organization. Obesity and Overweight. [Online] World Health Organization. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>

nutrition programming aims to support countries to address all forms of malnutrition – that is, undernutrition (wasting, stunting), micronutrient deficiencies, as well as overweight and obesity. Importantly, UNICEF works exclusively on the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity. UNICEF does not endorse companies, products, brands, or services. Additionally, the research and knowledge generated by this partnership is exclusively controlled by UNICEF to guarantee neutrality.

Read more: novonordisk.com and [UNICEF.com](https://unicef.com)

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