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# Obesity

*Stats show half the adults in Halton are overweight  
 and the problem is growing among children*

**STEPHANIE HOUNSELL**  
 Special to The IFP

It's a sobering statistic with consequences that aren't all known yet— half the adults in Halton weigh more than they should.

More specifically, 37 per cent are overweight and 13 per cent are obese.

Last Wednesday, more than 100 community participants gathered to discuss the implications of such a situation and offer up ideas about what should be done.

The forum, entitled 'Healthy Weights: Halton Takes Action', took place at Country Heritage Park, where numerous speakers presented their thoughts on the topic.

Organized by Halton Region's health department, the event was one step in developing an action plan to tackle obesity.

"This event was an opportunity for key community partners to provide input for change when it comes to building healthier communities for everyone in Halton," said Halton Regional Chair Gary Carr after the event.

Dr. Bob Nosal, Halton's Medical Officer of Health, told the audience the issue of unhealthy weight is of particular interest to him.

He explained that although statistics indicate many of Halton's health indicators are better than elsewhere in Ontario and Canada, when it comes to weight, "we're relatively similar to the rest of Canada."

He added obesity is known to cause numerous health problems and is a burden on the health-care system.

"To address this issue, we need to do it together," he said.

However, the issue is far from simple.

"Although healthy food choices and quality physical activity are important contributors to healthy weights, we have to acknowledge that the causes of obesity are often complex," he said. "There is no easy solution to produce sustainable long-term change. However, I believe we have started to take steps in the right direction."

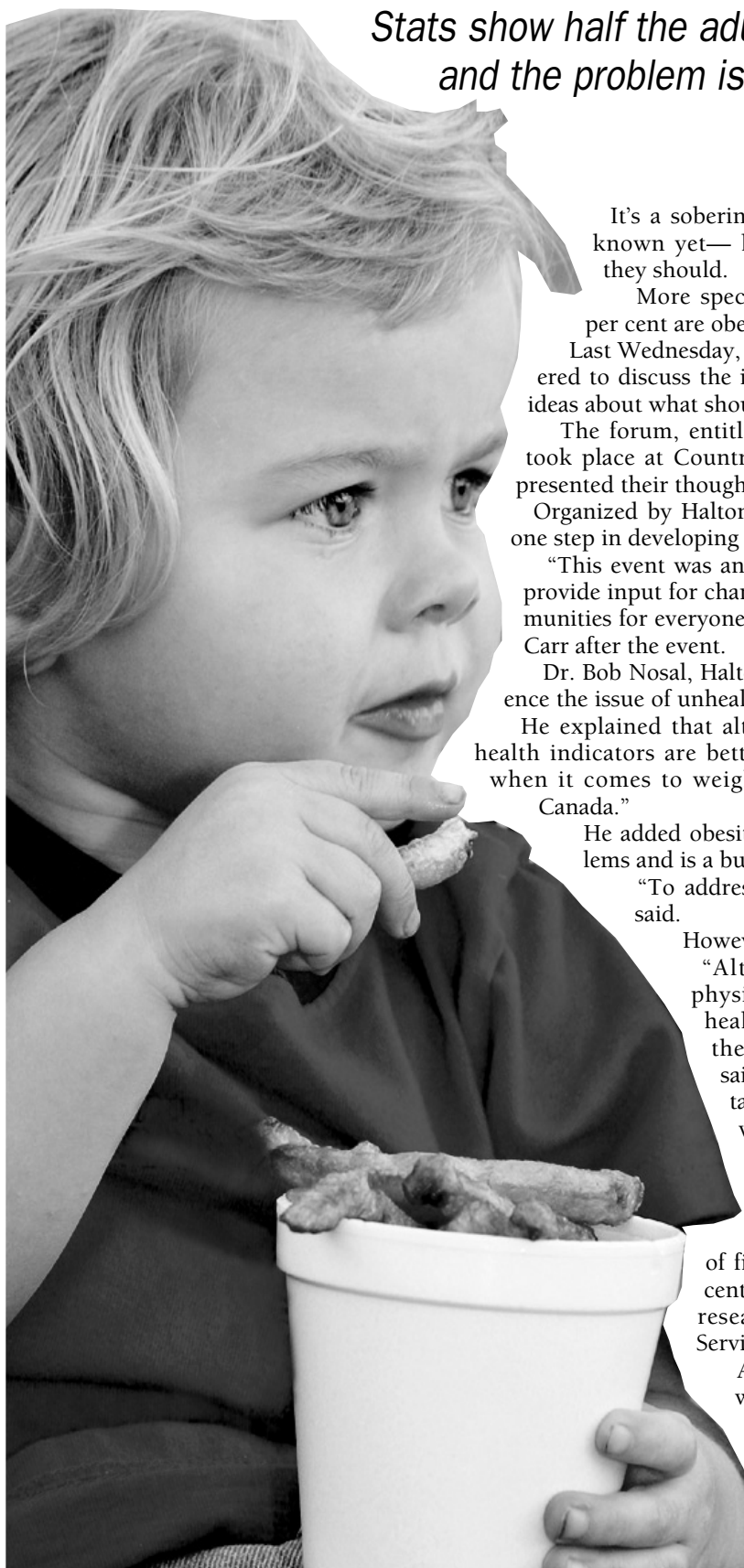
Unfortunately, weight problems aren't just an adult problem.

Studies show that in Halton, 13 per cent of five-year-olds are overweight, while eight per cent are obese, reported Shelley Lothian, senior research advisor for Halton Region Children's Services.

Amongst 15-year-olds, 16 per cent are overweight and four per cent are obese.

Low socio-economic status seems to play a role, as teens who fall into that category tend to eat less fruits and veggies and more chips and pop, Lothian reported.

See INACTIVITY, pg. 9



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