

Ask Leyla: Should I be worried about my granddaughter's weight?



Q: I have a nine-year-old granddaughter who is quite overweight. The rest of the family, mom, dad and three siblings are all normal weight. They don't keep a lot of junk food or sodas in the house and she doesn't overeat at meals.

Doctors don't appear to have any idea what is wrong with her and blame it on her diet. I should mention she has a different biological father than her siblings.

A: Barring any metabolic abnormalities that your granddaughter may have inherited from her biological father, or any undiagnosed medical condition(s) for that matter, your granddaughter's development will differ compared to her siblings. Each of us has a unique biochemistry after all and her genotype, as well as her phenotype, will reflect this.

The tender age of nine is just prior to a major growth spurt in many young girls. I can attest to that as I grew a full four inches in height from eleven to twelve years of age!

Indeed, your granddaughter's "chubbiness" may diminish or even disappear when she sprouts in stature with puberty and maturing sexual development. Time will tell. But

it's less likely if her eating habits are poor.

Family dynamics contribute to children's eating behaviors. Teasing and/or restrictive eating practices are never advised because it can result in disordered eating, as stated by the *American Academy of Pediatrics*. Best practices include healthy eating for the entire family.

A wonderful resource I recommend, that I consider an authority on feeding kids right, is the Ellyn Satter Institute.

To your health!