

## Early puberty: early obesity a likely cause

*By ACSH Staff — November 20, 2000*

This letter was written in response to an article *Time* published on October 30, 2000 that discussed early puberty in girls and linked it to a variety of possible causes.

The condition of accelerated puberty in girls is more of a hypothesis than a widely observed phenomenon in spite of anecdotal reports. Your article seemed to emphasize the vague possibility that a host of chemicals, those found in the environment or in foods, could initiate early puberty. But the only scientifically documented cause is the increase in childhood obesity, and the demonstrated involvement of fat cell-derived leptin in initiating pubertal events. Next time, I hope you will do your readers a favor by presenting such stories in a more realistic context, rather than alarming them on the basis of weak scientific evidence.

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