



Kevin

"He just can't do what you're asking," explains Stacy. She is in for a follow-up visit with her 14 year-old's pediatrician and was frustrated by the news she is receiving. Kevin has gained weight rapidly over the past year despite receiving detailed instructions on diet and exercise. He has put on six more pounds since his last visit two months ago and Stacy, typically calm and patient, is becoming more frustrated and concerned. Kevin remained quiet, his head down as she continued, "I can't keep tabs on what he is doing like I need to."

There was silence in the room, as Stacy and Dr. Collier, Kevin's pediatrician, looked to the boy for a response. "He just looks so unhappy to me," she says.

Two years ago, Stacy bought a small, tidy, two bedroom house in their neighborhood. She and Kevin lived previously in a cramped apartment off of a frontage road. She took on extra hours at her job working security at a chemical plant to pay the mortgage and set aside money for emergencies. Stacy works close to a 60 hour week, getting home just before 8 pm. A high school basketball star, she is 5'8" and close to her high school weight of 185 pounds. She still bests Kevin in one-on-one in the driveway. Stacy has always been comfortable with her size and took pride in her ability to be on her feet all day and still have energy in the evenings. Kevin is naturally athletic, a source of pride for his mother.

Kevin attends a magnet school between home and his mom's work and she dropped him off at 7 am. Kevin qualified for reduced cost breakfast and lunch and often goes to the snack machine after school. An 8th grader, he has several friends, is relatively popular, and is a good student. Kevin stays after school for sports in the fall and winter. After sports and in the spring, he goes to his cousin Jason's until his mother picks him up. They eat dinner at 8:30, he does his homework, watches TV, and go to bed before 10. Stacy makes sure they eat healthy and though they are on a budget, she cooks well-balanced meals they both enjoy.

"Dr. Collier, you don't understand. I can't keep him from eating whatever he gets his hands on at his cousin's," says Stacy. Jason is quite overweight and the boys have their pick of snack foods, soda, and sugary cereal at his house. "Jason's older sister watches them, but she can't tell them what to do. They eat nonstop and play video games. He still wants to eat when he gets home, and it's the healthiest meal he gets all day."

Kevin kept his head down, not making eye contact with Dr. Collier or his mother.

"What am I supposed to do?" says Stacy, tearfully.

1. What other questions would you be likely to ask the patient and mother?
2. How would the answers influence the next steps you would take?
3. What key developmental concerns are at play? What if Kevin were 11? 17?
4. What in Kevin's social environment are potential factors in addressing the problem?
5. What challenges would the provider potentially face in this situation?
6. What would an interdisciplinary team approach bring to this situation?