



All-island Obesity News
E-bulletin of the All-island Obesity Action Forum
Volume 4, Issue 3, May/June 2012

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this edition of All-island Obesity News. I am delighted at the overwhelming interest that has been expressed for the next All-island Obesity Action Forum workshop 'From Shift Work to Shifting the Pounds - The Value of a Healthy Workforce' which will be held tomorrow Tuesday 19th June 2012 in Queens University Belfast. This year the workshop is supported by **safefood**, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Northern Ireland and the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists.

As usual, this edition contains a variety of information from current research, reports and resources, to events and training opportunities. We are delighted to showcase a number of initiatives from various parts of the island aimed at tackling obesity. We would ask you to circulate this among your colleagues and to share your work via this publication by submitting all relevant news items to Emily Kelleher at obesityforum@safefood.eu.

Martin Higgins,
*Chief Executive, **safefood** and Chair, All-island Obesity Action Forum*

Minutes of Forum meetings, events and further details about the Forum can be accessed on the [Forum page of the safefood website](#).

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If you would like to **subscribe** to or **include any information** in this bi-monthly e-bulletin please email us at obesityforum@safefood.eu.

[Update from Forum Members:](#)

Safefood

- **Stop the Spread**
The "Stop the Spread" campaign won 'Best Healthcare Campaign' at the recent An Post Direct Marketing & Digital Awards. The campaign has also been nominated in the 'Best Public Information Campaign' category at the Public Relations Consultants Association awards to be held later this month.

- **Nutrition Takeout Series**

The latest in our Takeout Research series (burgers) will be launched next month. 240 burger samples from across 47 outlets were surveyed for the report. The survey is part of a number of nutritional surveys of popular takeaway foods **safe food** have commissioned including Chicken & Potato; Salt in Soup; Takeaway Pizza. A survey on Chinese Takeaway Food will be completed later this year.

- **Labelling Resource**

Development work on an educational labelling resource for post primary schools in Northern Ireland is currently in progress. This work is being done in partnership with the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland with a planned launch date for the resource of September 2012.

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Sport Northern Ireland (Sport NI)

- **sported.**, the UK's leading sport for development charity, and Sport NI, the leading public body for the development of sport in Northern Ireland, marked their commitment to work together to benefit local sport for development groups by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. Through a partnership approach **sported.**, and Sport NI hope to highlight and support the work of both the sport for development sector and sport sector in local communities across Northern Ireland. To learn more about the work of **sported.**, and the benefits of becoming a Member visit sported.org.uk. For further information on the work of Sport NI visit www.sportni.net.

Food Standards Agency-NI (FSANI)

- **Caloriewise**

The FSA NI has launched a six-month pilot scheme that will see local food businesses displaying calorie information on menus for the first time. Caloriewise will encourage consumers to make more informed choices when eating out. The Caloriewise scheme is being trialled by eight local businesses: The Streat, Sodexo Catering, Botanic Inns, Aramark and Mount Charles Catering and three local health trusts. The Caloriewise pilot will run from 1 May to 31 October 2012. During this time, calorie information will be displayed in one or more outlets of the participating food businesses, following principles for displaying calorie information, as set out by FSA NI:

- o Calorie information will be displayed clearly and prominently at point of choice
- o Calorie information will be provided for standardised food and drink items sold
- o Calorie information will be provided per portion/item/meal
- o Reference information on calorie requirements will be displayed clearly and prominently.

The pilot will be evaluated to consider the practical issues for businesses, as well as to gauge consumers' reactions and their understanding of the scheme.

A guidance document has been produced, which offers practical advice to assist catering businesses that want to apply voluntary calorie labelling. There is also a guidance document for consumers

Further information on the scheme can be found at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/northernireland/nutritionni/caloriewise/>

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- **Activ8 Eatwell**

Activ8 Eatwell has been developed as a complete package of three manuals for Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 primary school teachers throughout Northern Ireland. The programme facilitates a whole school approach to the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity. This work has been led by FSA NI in partnership with Sports NI. The resources are now available to download from www.activ8ni.net

Nutrition and Health Foundation (NHF)

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- **Date for your diary:**

The NHF will be hosting its 5th Annual Seminar in the Gibson Hotel on the 19th of September 2012. We will circulate more details when available.

- **European Food Framework Dissemination Event**

Recording of the dissemination event of the European Food Framework Pilot Projects (29th May 2012) is now available at: <http://www.europeanfoodframework.eu/disseminationrecordings>

With life-long habits being established at an early age; numbers of overweight and obese children in the EU are rising; variable nutrition education and the need to ensure that young people become informed consumers based on factual information, the European Food Framework project seeks to establish a unique food, nutrition and lifestyle resource to promote healthy active lifestyles to children and young people (aged 5 to 16 years) throughout Europe.

- **Kids Size Me Awards**

The 2012 Irish Restaurant Awards included the Kids Size Me initiative* as one of the seven primary awards categories. Nominations for the award were made by the public and also the industry sector. The All Ireland awards took place on the 14th of May in the Burlington Hotel.

For the Kids Size Me awards, the winners were:

Region	Winner
All Ireland	Ely Gastro Pub, Grand Canal Square, Dublin 2.
Connaught	Davis Restaurant & Yeats' Tavern, Drumcliff, Co. Sligo
Dublin	Ely Gastro Pub, Grand Canal Square, Dublin 2.
Leinster	Café Sol, Kilkenny.
Munster	Stonecutters Kitchen, Doolin, Co Clare
Ulster	The Olde Castle Bar & Red Hugh Restaurant, Donegal town.

*In 2011, the NHF in conjunction with the Restaurants Association of Ireland launched an initiative called Kids Size Me. The initiative aims to ensure children have access to healthier food options when dining out by making child size portions of adult meals available as an alternative to ordering from the standard children's menu.

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07.06.12: Overweight and obesity in UK fire-fighters. (UK)

This study aims to establish the prevalence of obesity among a large sample of fire-fighters in the UK and to explore changes in body mass index (BMI) over a 3-year period. The BMI and body composition of 735 male fire-fighters were assessed in 2008 and 2011. In 2008, 65% of the fire-fighters were either overweight (54%) or obese (11%). In 2011, slightly fewer fire-fighters were overweight (53%), but the proportion classified as obese increased significantly to 13%. Read [abstract](#) in Oxford Journal of Occupational Medicine.

06.06.12: Cluster-randomised trial to evaluate the 'Change for Life' mass media/social marketing campaign in the UK. (England)

The study aims were to examine the impact of personalised feedback and print material from the Change4life (C4L) campaign on parent's attitudes and behaviours about their children's eating and activity in a community-based cluster-randomised controlled trial. Awareness was high in both groups at baseline (75%), but increased significantly in the intervention group by follow-up (96% vs. 87%). The C4L campaign materials achieved increases in awareness of the campaign, but in this sample had little impact on attitudes or behaviour. Read [provisional paper](#) in BioMed Central.

June 2012: Is it time to regulate over-the-counter weight-loss formulations? (UK)

Many products claiming to promote weight loss are freely available to purchase over the counter and are used by a substantial proportion of the population in many countries, who are often seeking rapid weight loss without long-term lifestyle changes. Surveys in England and Australia have found that at least 70% of community pharmacies stock these products and they are also available through internet pharmacies. Read [abstract](#) in Wiley Online Library.

June 2012: Obesity and severe obesity forecasts through 2030. (US)

This study presents estimates of adult obesity and severe obesity prevalence through 2030 based on nonlinear regression models. The forecasted results are then used to simulate the savings that could be achieved through modestly successful obesity prevention efforts. The study estimates a 33% increase in obesity prevalence and a 130% increase in severe obesity prevalence over the next 2 decades. Read [full text](#) in American Journal of Preventative Medicine.

24.05.12: Mobile Phone Interventions to Increase Physical Activity and Reduce Weight: A Systematic Review. (US)

This systematic review was conducted to determine user satisfaction and effectiveness of smartphone applications and text messaging interventions to promote weight reduction and physical activity. More than half of the studies (71%) reported statistically significant results in at least 1 outcome of weight loss, physical activity, dietary intake, decreased body mass index, decreased waist circumference, sugar-sweetened beverage intake, screen time, and satisfaction or acceptability outcomes. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

23.05.12: Delivery by caesarean section and risk of obesity in preschool age children: a prospective cohort study. (US)

To examine whether delivery by caesarean section is a risk factor for childhood obesity- Women were recruited during early pregnancy between 1999 and 2002, and their children were followed after birth. 1255 children were included with body composition measured at 3 years of age. 284 children (22.6%) were delivered by caesarean section and at age 3, 15.7% of children delivered by caesarean section were obese compared with 7.5% of children born vaginally. Read [abstract](#) in BMJ Archives of Disease in Childhood.

18.05.12: 'McDonalds and KFC, it's never going to happen': the challenges of working with food outlets to tackle the obesogenic environment. (UK)

This study investigated barriers and facilitators to public health work with food outlets in disadvantaged areas. In-depth qualitative interviews with 36 directors, managers and public health service delivery staff in a coterminous primary care trust and local authority in northwest England. Encouraging food outlets to contribute to tackling the obesogenic environment is a major challenge for local public health teams that requires supportive national policies. Read [abstract](#) in Oxford Journal of Public Health.

15.05.12: A systematic review of body fat distribution and mortality in older people. (US)

Researchers conducted a systematic review investigating body fat distribution in older adults and its association with morbidity and mortality. The search yielded 2702 citations. Following three levels of screening, 25 studies were selected to evaluate the association between body fat distribution and comorbidity, and 17 studies were used in the mortality analysis. Findings suggest that the current clinical guidelines, recommending that overweight and obesity are major risk factors for increased morbidity and mortality are not applicable to this population. Read [full text](#) in Elsevier Maturitas.

04.05.12: Adolescent obesity and life satisfaction: Perceptions of self, peers, family, and school. (US)

This study contributes to research on adolescent life satisfaction by considering its association with body weight, as mediated by perceptions of self, peers, family, and school. Results indicate lower life satisfaction among adolescents that are overweight and obese relative to healthy weight youth, and that most of the negative association operates through perceptions of self, peers, parents, and school. Researchers found perceptions of body weight are generally more strongly associated with low life satisfaction among girls compared to boys. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

03.05.12: A Randomised Trial of a Weight Loss Intervention for Overweight and Obese People Diagnosed with Coronary Heart Disease and/or Type 2 Diabetes.

The objective of this study is to test a 16-week group-based weight reduction intervention combining exercise, diet and behaviour change strategies aimed to increase self-efficacy (Healthy Eating and Exercise Lifestyle Program-HEELP) on weight, body mass index (BMI), waist circumference and exercise in obese people with coronary heart disease (CHD) and/or type 2 diabetes mellitus. HEELP participants lost significantly more weight, BMI and waist circumference and exercised more days/week for a longer duration/week than usual care. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

May 2012: Weight issues associated with pregnancy

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New research is placing an emphasis on achieving a healthy weight both before and during pregnancy. Being overweight or obese prior to and during pregnancy increases the risk of health problems for mother and child. Dietary energy requirements increase during pregnancy but only in the last trimester and only by around 200kcal per day. There is no need to 'eat for two'. [Read more](#) in the European Food Information Council.

25.04.12: Differences in Weight Status and Energy-Balance Related Behaviours among Schoolchildren across Europe: The ENERGY-Project.

A school-based survey among 10-12 year old children (n=723) was conducted in seven European countries using a standardized protocol. 25.8% and 5.4% of boys, and 21.8% and 4.1% of girls were overweight (including obese) and obese respectively. Higher prevalence of overweight/obesity was observed in Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and Spain than in Belgium, Netherlands and Norway. Large differences between countries were found in intakes of sugar-sweetened beverages, breakfast, active transport, TV and computer time. More favourable overweight status and behaviour patterns were found in

girls than boys and in children of higher educated parents than in children of lower educated parents. Read [full text](#) in PLoS ONE.

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17.04.12: Breastfeeding and risk of overweight and obesity at nine years of age. (Ireland)

The present study used data from the Growing Up in Ireland study to examine the relationship between retrospectively recalled breastfeeding data and contemporaneously measured weight status for 7798 children at nine years of age controlling for a wide range of variables. The results indicated that being breastfed for 13 to 25 weeks was associated with a 38% ($p < 0.05$) reduction in the risk of obesity at nine years, while being breastfed for 26 weeks or more was associated with a 51% ($p < 0.01$) reduction in the risk of obesity at nine years of age. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

24.04.12: Can a school based programme in a natural environment reduce BMI in overweight adolescents? (Australia)

This pilot study explores the effects of a live-in school based programme in a natural environment in producing a reduction in BMI of overweight children. Participation in the programme reduced the BMI of boys who were in the normal to obese range, but not in girls. For the overweight and obese boys BMI decreased by up to 2.5kg/m^2 . Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

24.04.12: Using Facebook and Text Messaging to Deliver a Weight Loss Program to College Students. (US)

This study examined the feasibility, acceptability, and initial efficacy of a technology-based 8 week weight loss intervention among college students. Students ($N = 52$) were randomly assigned to one of three arms: Facebook, Facebook Plus or Waiting List Control with assessments at 4 weeks and 8 weeks. At 8 weeks, the Facebook Plus group had significantly greater weight loss ($-2.4 \pm 2.5\text{ kg}$) than the Facebook ($-0.63 \pm 2.4\text{ kg}$) and Waiting List ($-0.24 \pm 2.6\text{ kg}$). Read [abstract](#) in Obesity.

January 2012: Is healthy eating for obese children necessarily more costly for families? (UK)

This study examined whether adopting an improved theoretical, balanced diet compared to current dietary habits in children incurs additional cost. Children aged 5-16 years (body mass index [BMI] ≥ 98 th percentile) recruited to a randomised trial comparing a hospital-based and primary care childhood obesity clinics. The existing diet purchased at a budget supermarket was cheapest (£2.48/day). The healthier, alternative menu at the same shop cost an additional 33 pence/day (£2.81). The same exercise in a mid-range supermarket, incurred an additional cost of 4 pence per day (£3.40 versus £3.44). Switching from an unhealthy mid-range supermarket menu to the healthier, budget-outlet alternative saved 59 pence per day. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

2012: Association of early menarche age and overweight/obesity. (Croatia)

The aim of the study is to assess the association of overweight/obesity and early menarche age. The study comprised 2127 healthy girls aged 9 to 16 years. Median menarche age was 12.83 years; 25% girls had menarche before 11.98 years and 75% by 13.69 years. Girls who had menarche before 11.98 years had higher body weight values (48.5 vs. 40.2 kg) ($p < 0.001$), height (159.3 vs. 149.2 cm) ($p < 0.001$), and BMI (18.9 vs. 17.8 kg/m^2) ($p = 0.003$) than their peers without menarche. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

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[Nutrition News](#)

28.05.12: Adolescent nutritional awareness and use of food labels: Results from the national nutrition health and examination survey. (US)

Using the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey from 2005-6, researchers evaluated the frequency of nutrition awareness of USDA and CDC nutrition programs and

use of food labels in adolescents. Less than 25% of adolescents decided which foods to purchase by reading material on the nutrition facts label. There were significant racial and ethnic differences in awareness of federal nutrition programs with Mexican-Americans having the lowest levels of awareness of the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid in comparison with other groups. Read [provisional paper](#) in BioMed Central.

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21.05.12: Marketing foods to children through product packaging: prolific, unhealthy and misleading. (Australia)

The aim of this study was to investigate marketing techniques used on the packaging of child-oriented products sold through supermarkets. One hundred and fifty-seven discrete products were marketed to children via product packaging; most (75%) represented non-core foods, being high in fat or sugar. Claims about health and nutrition were found on 55.5% of non-core foods. This deserves urgent attention owing to their potential to mislead and confuse child and adult consumers. Read [abstract](#) in Public Health Nutrition.

22.05.12: Eating on the run. A qualitative study of health agency and eating behaviours among fast food employees.

This qualitative study aimed to identify factors that influence individual level health agency with respect to healthy eating choices in uniformly constrained environments (e.g., fast food restaurants). Emergent themes included environmental influences on eating behaviours (time, cost, restaurant policies and social networks) and internal psychological factors (feelings associated with hunger, food knowledge versus food preparation know-how and perceptions of food options). Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

09.05.12: The Use of Low-Calorie Sweeteners (LCS) by Adults: Impact on Weight Management. (Canada)

The aim of this review was to gain clarity on the role of LCS in weight management and their impact on diet quality. In addition, because the majority of studies aimed at identifying associations between LCS and these outcomes are based on observational data, the pitfalls in designing and evaluating data from observational studies are also discussed. Authors conclude that there is no evidence that LCS can be claimed to be a cause of higher body weights in adults. Read [full text](#) in The Journal of Nutrition.

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09.05.12: The Use of Low-Calorie Sweeteners by Children: Implications for Weight Management. (Canada)

The rise in paediatric obesity since the 1970s has been well established in the US. As a potential means to help slow the obesity epidemic, low-calorie sweeteners (LCS) have gained attention as dietary tools to assist in adherence to weight loss plans or prevention of excess weight gain. Observational studies tend to show positive correlations between LCS consumption and weight gain in children and adolescents. Although the data are intriguing, these epidemiologic studies do not establish that LCS cause weight gain, because there are likely to be many lifestyle and genetic differences between children and families who choose to consume LCS and those who do not.

Read [full text](#) in The Journal of Nutrition.

04.05.12: Overweight and Obese Humans Overeat Away from Home. (US)

This study investigated the differences in the meal patterns of normal weight vs. overweight/obese individuals occurring at home vs. other locations. The location of meals and their size in free-living participants were continuously recorded for 7 consecutive days. In both studies, compared to eating at home, overweight/obese participants ate larger meals away from home in both restaurants and other locations than normal weight participants. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

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01.05.12: The gut microbiota and its relationship to diet and obesity: New insights. (Ireland)

Obesity develops from a prolonged imbalance of energy intake and energy expenditure. However, the relatively recent discovery that the composition and function of the gut microbiota impacts on obesity has led to an explosion of interest in what is now a distinct research field. Read [abstract](#) in Pub Med.

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15.04.12: Fast food prices, obesity, and the minimum wage. (US)

Recent proposals argue that a fast food tax may be an effective policy lever for reducing population weight. Although there is growing evidence for a negative association between fast food prices and weight among adolescents, less is known about adults. Researchers argue that the minimum wage is an exogenous source of variation in fast food prices, conditional on income and employment. Read [abstract](#) in Science Direct.

[Physical Activity](#)

06.06.12: School day segmented physical activity patterns of high and low active children. (UK)

This study described accelerometer assessed physical activity patterns of high and low active children during segmented school week days whilst controlling for potential correlates. Children were classified as high active (HIGH) or low active (LOW) depending on the percentage of week days they accumulated at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA). HIGH active children achieved significantly more moderate physical activity (MPA) and vigorous physical activity (VPA) than LOW active during four of the five segments of the school day when analyses were adjusted for potential correlates. Read [provisional full text](#) in BioMed Central.

03.05.12: Overweight and obese adolescents: what turns them off physical activity?

A systematic review of qualitative studies was undertaken to understand the barriers to physical activity experienced by adolescents who were overweight or obese. Thirty-five barriers were identified, 13 of which occurred in physical activity situations in the school setting, 18 were not linked to a specific setting, and the remainder were common across both contexts. The fact that these barriers emerged from studies that focused on topics such as victimisation and mental health is particularly poignant and reflects the potentially pervasive influence of adolescent's excessive weight not only in relation to physical activity situations but other aspects of their lives. Read [provisional full text](#) in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity.

03.05.12: Active video games: the mediating effect of aerobic fitness on body composition.

The objective of this study was to identify mediators of the effect of an active video games intervention on body composition. Data from a two-arm parallel randomized controlled trial of an active video game intervention (n = 322) were analysed. The primary outcome was change from baseline in BMI. A priori of secondary outcomes were considered as potential mediators of the intervention on BMI, including aerobic fitness (VO2Max), time spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA), and food snacking at 24 weeks. Playing active video games can have a positive effect on body composition in overweight or obese children and this effect is most likely mediated through improved aerobic fitness. Read [provisional full text](#) in the International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity.

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03.05.12: PE lessons 'put girls off exercise' (NHS choices: Health News)

"Schoolgirls are being put off exercise and sport by their PE lessons," The Daily Telegraph has reported. Apparently, many young girls feel self-conscious when exercising or unhappy about the activities on offer. A report from the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF), which looked at the views girls and boys hold about physical activity, sport and PE lessons. The report found that only 12% of girls aged 14 get enough physical activity each week – roughly half the number of boys at the same age. Read [full story](#) on the NHS choices website.

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25.04.12: A qualitative investigation of attitudes towards aerobic and resistance exercise amongst overweight and obese individuals.

This qualitative study examined the views and attitudes towards aerobic and resistance exercise amongst overweight and obese individuals engaged in a weight management clinic. For the overweight and obese women, weight loss was the primary motivation for physical activity participation. Subsequently, these women perceived a failure to lose weight as strongly affecting their motivation to continue or re-engage in physical activity. Only 3 participants selected the resistance exercise option. The view of resistance exercise as a masculine activity was a dominant theme amongst all participants. A lack of knowledge of how to perform certain exercises emerged as a barrier. Read [provisional full text](#) in BioMed Central.

24.04.12: Rate of weight gain predicts change in physical activity levels: a longitudinal analysis of the EPIC-Norfolk cohort. (UK)

This population-based prospective cohort study aimed to investigate the relationship of body weight and its changes over time with physical activity (PA). The main outcome measure was PA at the 10-year follow-up. Researchers found weight gain during short, medium and long-term is a significant determinant of future physical inactivity independent of baseline weight and activity. Read [abstract](#) in PubMed.

26.03.12: Functional movement is negatively associated with weight status and positively associated with physical activity in British primary school children. (UK)

Overweight and obesity in childhood are associated with poorer functional movement performance and no study appears to have examined this issue in a paediatric population. In this study researchers looked at the relations between BMI, ambulatory physical activity and functional movement screen (FMS) performance were compared in 58, 10-11-year-old children. The results of this study highlight that ambulatory physical activity and weight status are significant predictors of functional movement in British children. Read [full text](#) in Hindawi.

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May 2012: WHO launches guidance for tackling childhood obesity.

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of tools for Member States to determine and identify priority areas for action in the field of population-based prevention of childhood obesity. Read more about the [guidance tool](#) on the World Health Organisation website.

[Forthcoming Events](#)

June 2012: Family Health Initiative – Healthier Choices, Healthier Families.

Early Years, the organisation for young children is offering families the chance to take part in a fantastic, **FREE**, 12 week 'UP4IT' programme, known locally as the Family Health Initiative. This programme helps support families with children aged 8-11 to become healthier and get more active together. The next programmes start on

Wednesday 20th June in Ashgrove Community Centre, Portadown and **Friday 22nd June** in Brownlow Community Hub, Craigavon. The programme is jam-packed with fun activities including swimming, football, inventive new games, smoothie making, cookery sessions and much, much more. To find out more about this programme and book your space, please call Diane Boyd on 07791 334012 or the Early Years office on 028 8554 9416.

6th September 2012: Association for the study of obesity Ireland (ASOI) Inaugural Conference will be held on 6th September 2012. Abstracts for poster presentation are welcome from clinicians, practitioners, academics, researchers, and students working in all fields of obesity and who wish to share their learning. Please submit your abstract to abstracts@asoi.info no later than **17:00 on Friday 20th July 2012**.

17-19th September 2012: The National Cancer Registry is hosting the 34th annual meeting of the International Association of Cancer Registries in Cork. Read more about the event and how to register at <http://www.iacr2012.org/>.

19th September 2012: the Nutrition and Health Foundation will be hosting its 5th Annual Seminar in the Gibson Hotel. More details will be circulated when available.

Visit the **safefood** website to view a [calendar of forthcoming events](#)

All Island Obesity Action Forum Members

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Full details of [members](#) can be found on the Forum page of the **safefood** website