

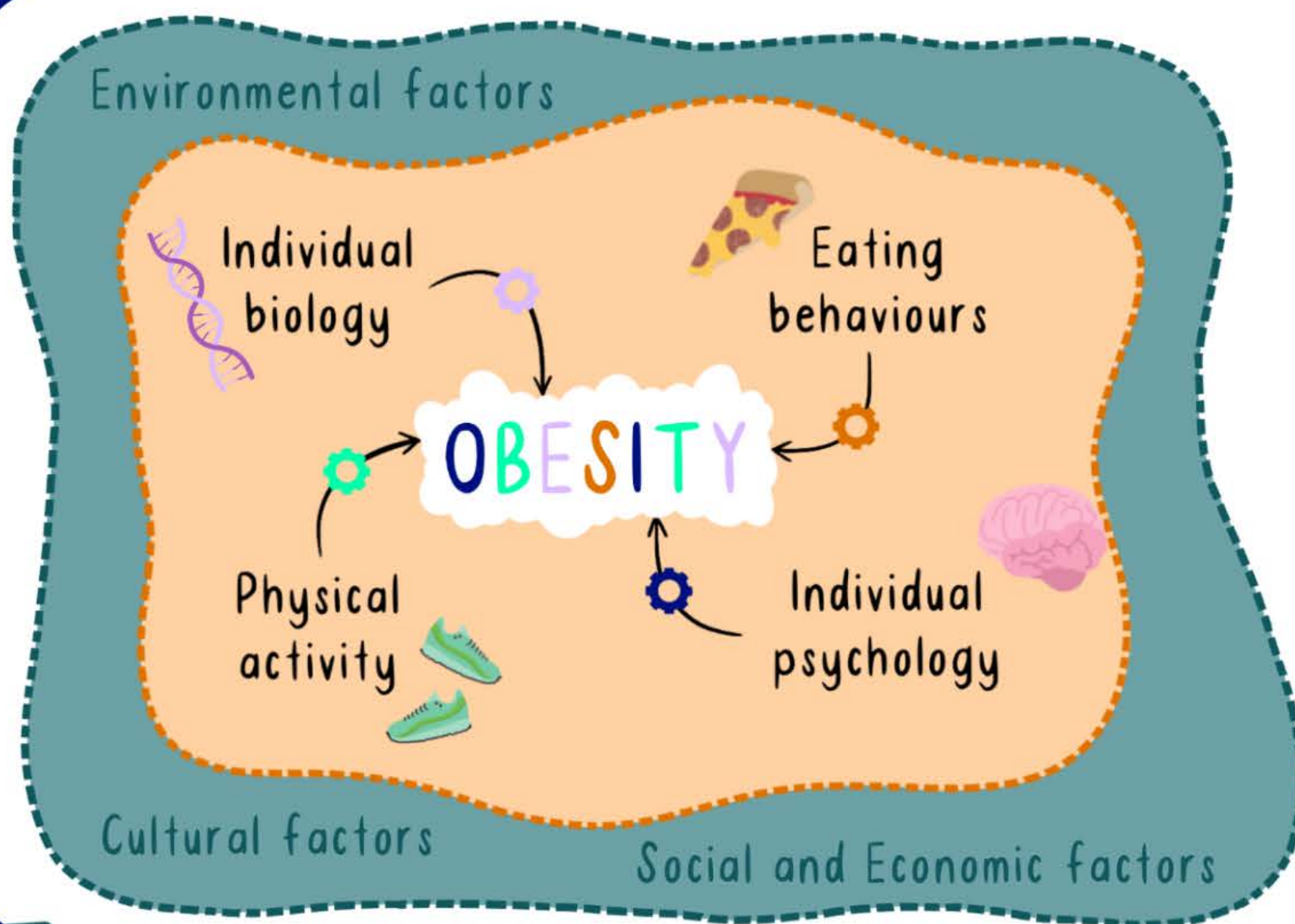


WHAT IS OBESITY?

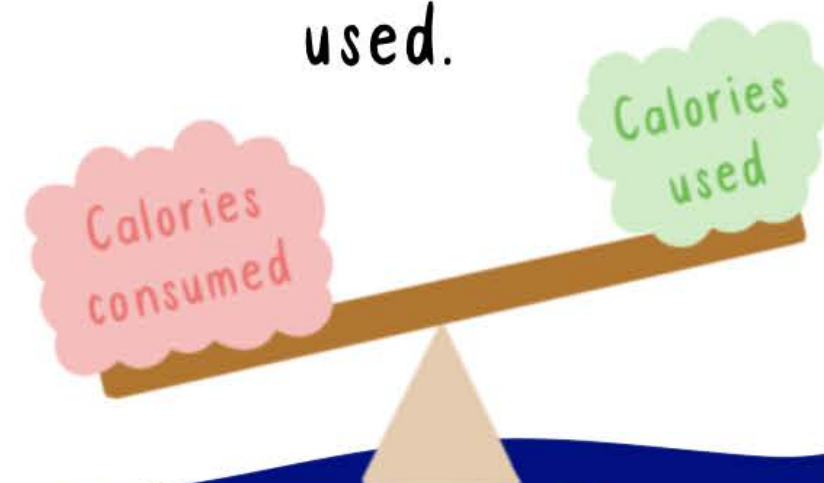


Globally, approximately 4 in 10 adults are overweight. Over 1 in 10 adults are living with obesity.

Obesity is a build up of excessive body fat. It can lead to an increased risk of developing diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.



The development of obesity is complex. No factor is solely responsible. In simple terms, obesity is caused by long-term positive energy balance - when calories consumed exceed calories used.



Risk factors for obesity can be:

- Changeable: e.g., low physical activity and dietary choices
- Unchangeable: e.g., age, family history, genetics

Prevention of obesity has become a global public health objective.

DIETARY SUGARS

Excess calories intake from all foods, including sugars, can lead to **weight gain**. Research does not show a direct association between dietary sugars and obesity.¹

There was **not enough evidence** for the World Health Organization to make sugars recommendations based on obesity risk.²

FREE SUGARS

A **high intake** of free sugars can be associated with **excess calorie intake**. Free sugars will only result in obesity if **more calories** from these sugars are consumed than used.^{1, 3}

SUGARS-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

When providing **excess calories**, **increased** sugars-sweetened beverages intake has been associated with **weight gain**.⁴

Associations **cannot prove** that one thing **causes** another. An association only shows if there is a **link** between two factors.

Sugars in drinks might not lead to feelings of fullness in the same way that sugars in food do.

This might lead to excessive calorie intake.⁵ But, SSB intake often occurs within an 'unhealthy' diet and lifestyle.⁶ This could have a role to play in the association between SSB and weight gain.

Maintaining an **energy balance**, rather than following a specific diet, should be the **primary strategy** for **obesity prevention**. Evidence shows that weight loss can occur as long as overall **calorie intakes** are **reduced**.



Some countries and regions have implemented **sugars taxes** with the aim to **reduce** obesity prevalence. There is **insufficient data** at the moment to conclude if these policies are having an **effect** on obesity rates.



Creating an **environment** that better suits our **biology** and **supports** us in developing and sustaining **healthy eating** and **activity habits** is necessary to tackle the global burden of obesity.

The World Health Organisation recommends that intake of free sugars should **not exceed 10% of total energy intake**. There is a further recommendation to reduce intakes to **below 5%** of total energy for **additional health benefits**.



These recommendations are based on evidence of **sugars and dental caries risk** and not obesity risk. The evidence looking at the effects of **sugars** on **obesity risk** was **inconclusive**.

