

FEELING GOOD

Healthy lifestyle choices for kids

Austin Regional Clinic Child Weight Management Guide

Your doctor is concerned about your child's weight. Excess weight may lead to health problems. Your child is not the only one with a weight problem. About one third of American children are now overweight. The number has been growing rapidly for the last 20 years. Many factors may be causing this. People are less active than they were in the past. They are eating and drinking more calories.

When adults gain too much weight, they are more likely to get high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, gallbladder disease, and bone problems. Heavy children are likely to stay heavy into adulthood. Children are starting to develop high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes. Most of these children are overweight or obese. If the weight problem and the medical problems do not improve, such children may be more prone to develop heart disease and diabetes problems before they reach middle age. This booklet will show you how to improve your child's weight and health.

Our goals are:

1. To prevent or postpone future health problems caused by obesity.
2. To reduce or maintain weight.
3. To raise the child's self-esteem.

Most children can slim down just by staying the same weight as they get taller. Staying the same weight is the right goal if your child does not already weigh as much as an adult. Children that weigh more than that need to slowly lose weight. One to two pounds per month is a good weight loss goal. The whole family needs to develop a healthy lifestyle for your child to succeed at weight control. Exercise, healthy eating, and family teamwork will get you there!

CONTENTS:

Food First	page 2
Let's Tackle Exercise	page 6
Making Changes	page 8
Resources	page 10



FOOD FIRST

Should my child go on a diet?

Children should not go on fad diets like adults sometimes do. A diet that is unbalanced, or is too low in calories could lead to health problems. It is best not to limit amounts of healthy food that children eat. The child may see that as punishment. Parents should see that their children are offered a variety of healthful foods. Children should decide how much they want to eat.

How do kids gain too much weight?

We get calories, or energy, from all foods. But when we eat more calories than we burn, the extra calories are stored as extra fat in our bodies. Most extra calories come from fat and sugar in foods. Food items that have much fat or sugar may be good in some ways. But the extra calories they contain make them fattening. We call these heavy foods. For instance, when we eat a peach, we are getting a low calorie, nutritious food. But when the peach is canned in heavy syrup, sugar is added. The peach is still nutritious, but now it is a heavy, more fattening food.

How should a growing child eat?

We know that children need a variety of foods from the Food Guide pyramid. Each day children need foods from each of these groups:

Food Group Serving Size	Number of Servings
Breads, starches 1 slice bread, ½ c. potato or rice	6-11
Fruits and vegetable ½ c. cooked, 1 c raw	5-7
Meats, eggs, beans 2 oz. meat, 1 c. beans	2
Milk 1 c. fat free milk, yogurt 1 oz. lowfat cheese	2-4

Younger children need the smaller number of portions. Teenage boys can eat the largest number.

FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

A Guide to Daily Food Choices

The Food Guide Pyramid emphasizes foods from the five food groups shown in the three lower sections of the Pyramid.

Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients you need. Foods in one group can't replace those in another. No one food group is more important than another - for good health, you need them all.

KEY
These symbols show fats and added sugars in foods.

- Fat (naturally occurring and added)
- ▼ Sugars (added)

The Pyramid is an outline of what to eat each day. It's not a rigid prescription, but a general guide that lets you choose a healthful diet that's right for you. The Pyramid calls for eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need and at the same time the right amount of calories to maintain a healthy weight.

Source: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE and the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

To control weight we need to eat more light and fewer heavy foods.

Explain to your child that the light foods help us to stay slim. The heavy foods are more fattening. This list can be used as a guideline.

Light		Heavy
Fruits		
Apples	Apricots	Fruit canned in heavy syrup
Applesauce	Bananas	Sweetened applesauce
Berries	Cantaloupe	Fruit roll-ups
Cherries	Figs	Fruit leather
Grapefruit	Grapes	Fruit chips
Nectarines	Oranges	Fruit juice
Papaya	Peaches	Dried cranberries
Pineapple	Plums	
Raisins	Prunes	
Pears	Strawberries	
Tangerines	Honeydew	
Lemons	Limes	
Fruit canned in juice or water		
Vegetables		
Artichokes	Asparagus	Vegetables in sauce
Bamboo shoots	Broccoli	Hash browns
Brussels sprouts	Carrots	French fries
Cabbage	Cauliflower	Onion rings
Celery	Cucumbers	Avocado
Eggplant	Green beans	Guacamole
Green onions	Greens	Olives
Jicama	Lettuce	Sweet pickles
Mushrooms	Onions	Potato salad
Peppers	Radishes	Fried vegetables
Sauerkraut	Sour pickles	Potato chips
Sprouts	Peas	Cream soups
Pinto beans	Black beans	
Sweet potatoes	Squash	
Black-eyed peas	Zucchini	
Refried beans	Tomatoes	
Vegetable soup	Clear soup	
V-8 juice	Tomato juice	
Meats and Main Dishes		
Chicken or turkey w/o skin		Fried chicken
Ham	Lean pork	Nuggets
Turkey sausage	Turkey bacon	Bacon
Egg substitutes	Egg whites	Ribs
Tuna in water	Fish	Sausage
		Eggs
		Fried fish
		Tuna in oil
		Fish Sticks
Lean beef	Venison	Chili
Small burger	Lamb	Pork rinds
Spaghetti and	Burrito	Tacos
Meatballs		Enchiladas
Lowfat hot dogs		Chalupa
Lowfat lunch meats		Pizza
Chinese stir-fry dishes		Peanut Butter
		Egg rolls
		Ground beef
		Hot dogs
		Regular lunch meats
		Chinese sweet/sour dishes

Light		Heavy
Breads and Starches		
Whole grain & enriched breads		Biscuits
Hamburger and hot dog buns		Sweet rolls
Hard breadsticks		Cornbread
Corn tortillas		Taco shells
Small bagel		Soft breadsticks
Unsweetened cereal		Flour tortillas
Graham cracker		Muffins
Grits		Sugar-sweetened cereal
Oatmeal		Pancakes
French toast	Waffles	
Oyster crackers	Saltines	Snack crackers
Chips		Buttered popcorn
Pretzels	"Lite" popcorn	Granola
Spaghetti	Pasta	Macaroni and cheese
Rice	Rice Cakes	Fettuccine Alfredo
Rolls	Fideo	Ramen noodles
Pie		
English muffin	Cracked wheat	Toaster pastries
Doughnuts		
Barley	Ry-Krisp	Cookies
Cakes		
Melba toast		Croissants
Stuffing		
		Spanish rice
		Fried Rice
		Granola bars
Milk and Dairy Products		
Fat free or 1% milk (lowfat)		Whole or 2% milk (reduced fat)
Ice cream		
Buttermilk	Plain yogurt	Frozen yogurt
Ice cream		
Fat free, no sugar added yogurt		Yogurt drinks
		Half-and-half
Lowfat cheese		Cheese
Sour cream		
Parmesan cheese		Cream cheese
Sour cream		
Cottage cheese		Cream sauce
Whipped cream		
lowfat ice cream		Whipped cream
Sherbet		
Sugar-free fudgsicles/popsicles		Fudgsicles
Sherbet		
Beverages		
Sugar-free Kool-Aid		Fruit juice
Fruit drinks		
Flavored water	Diet soda	Kool-Aid
Liquor		
WATER	Coffee, Tea	Popsicles
		Lemonade
		Frozen fruit juice bars
		Regular soda
		Beer
		Wine
		Liquor
Extras		
Picante	Hot sauce	Choc. topping
Chocolate		
Herbs	Spices	Gum
Candy		
Flavorings	Mustard	Mayonnaise
Butter		
Fat-free salad dressing		Margarine
Oil		
Vinegar	Soy sauce	Nuts
Coconut		
Barbecue sauce	Steak sauce	Tartar Sauce
Gravy		
Onion powder	Garlic	Salt
Jello		
Sugar-free Jello	Cinnamon	Sugar
Honey		
		Syrup
		Jam
		Jelly
		Seeds

Rules for limiting the heavy foods.

- Have heavy foods less often than you do now.
- Use smaller portions of heavy foods.
- Have sweets and soft drinks only on special occasions.
- Use lowfat or low sugar versions of heavy foods. For instance, lowfat cheese instead of regular cheese, light popcorn instead of buttered popcorn.
- Change your recipes to use less fat or sugar.
- Drink water instead of fruit juice. Juice has as many calories as regular soft drinks do. It is best not to use juice at all.

Rules for the light foods:

- Light foods can be used in larger portions.
- Vegetables are freebies. You can't gain too much weight from eating vegetables.
- On packaged light foods, check labels for added fats and sugars which could turn them into heavy foods.
- Have light foods with every meal and snack.
- Eat more light than heavy foods.

Portions

Portions can be a problem with many foods. Children should eat child-size amounts. The smallest portions in fast food restaurants are often too large for children.

If you can't find a "junior" burger size, split a larger hamburger with your child.

Here's why:

Child-size meal	Calories
Hamburger	260
1% Milk	100
TOTAL	360

Meal that is too big	Calories
Big Mac	560
Medium Coke	210
TOTAL	770

Only two items were eaten with each meal. The calories were over twice as high in the second because of more fat, more sugar, and larger portions.

Sometimes your child will want larger portions. Appetites vary from day to day, and a bigger appetite may come before or during a growth spurt. Let your child have an extra portion if he wants, but do ask him to think whether he is really hungry. Remind your child to eat slowly. This helps one feel full with a smaller portion of food. Parents should provide nutritious food and buy less of the heavy stuff. It is the child's job to decide how much he or she will eat.

Restaurants

Restaurants pose a special problem, because most of the food is heavy. The best restaurant foods are listed here:

Small burger	Salads
Small sandwich	Soups
Grilled chicken	Vegetarian pizza
Burrito	Soft tacos
Grilled fish	Vegetables
Stir-fried Chinese food	Iced tea
Milk	Water

“Parents should provide nutritious food and buy less of the heavy stuff. It is the child's job to decide how much he or she will eat.”

Rules for eating out:

- Encourage your child to order small portions, split a meal, or take home leftovers.
- Avoid fried foods.
- Split desserts or skip them.
- Ask the waiter to remove the chips from the table.
- Bring burgers home and have them with a tray of raw veggies instead of fries.

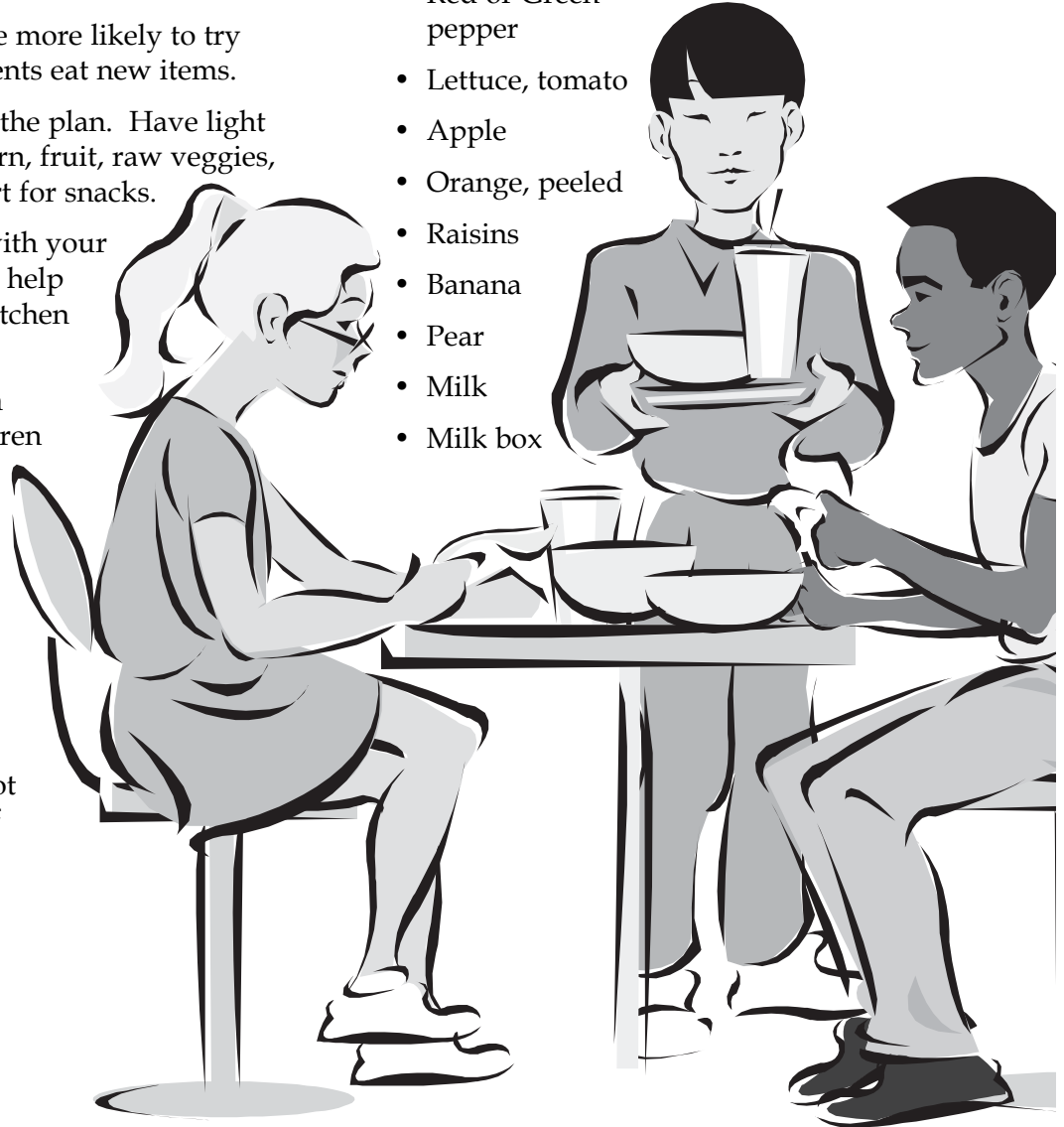
Tips for eating at home:

- Try to have set mealtimes. Children tend to snack too much if mealtimes are not on schedule. Do not skip meals.
- Eat together. Children are more likely to try new foods if they see parents eat new items.
- Make snack foods part of the plan. Have light foods such as "lite" popcorn, fruit, raw veggies, and fat-free milk or yogurt for snacks.
- Plan and prepare meals with your children. Getting them to help saves time, and teaches kitchen skills.
- Do not insist that children clean their plates. If children eat more than they want, they are learning to eat past the point of fullness.
- Eat slowly. Meals should last more than 15 minutes. If we eat too fast, we often overeat without realizing it.
- Do not snack if you are not hungry. Store food out of sight, so it doesn't tempt.

Lunches

Here are some ideas for packing lunch for school:

- Sandwich with mustard, ham, lettuce
- Sandwich with turkey salami, mustard
- Peanut butter sandwich
- Lowfat pimiento cheese spread
- Soup in thermos
- Saltines
- Celery sticks
- Carrot sticks
- Cucumber sticks
- Red or Green pepper
- Lettuce, tomato
- Apple
- Orange, peeled
- Raisins
- Banana
- Pear
- Milk
- Milk box



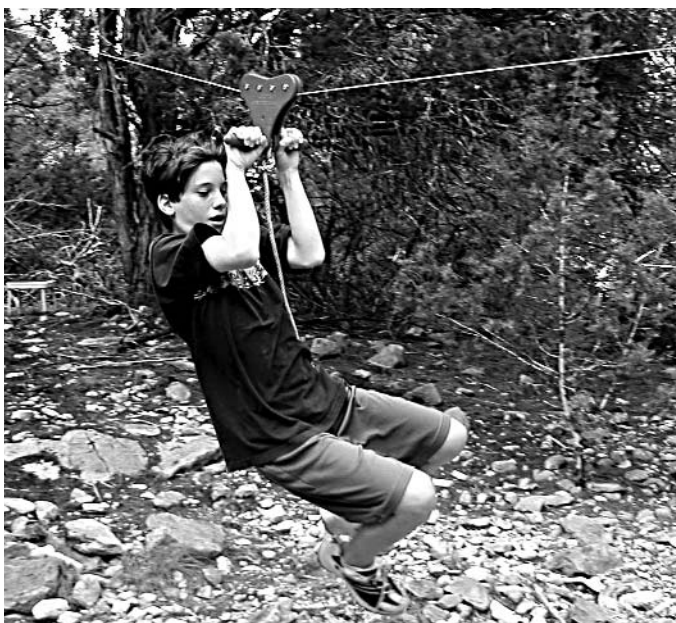
LET'S TACKLE EXERCISE

People are meant to move. When we are active we burn calories, build muscle, and thus help to control weight. Today's children do not move enough. Concerns for safety may keep them from playing outside. There may be few neighbor children with whom to play. PE in school does not provide enough exercise. Homework takes time too. But the main reason kids do not exercise is TV.

The average American schoolchild watches four hours of TV daily. When you add in the time spent using computers and video games, and watching movies-the number of hours kids spend sitting is staggering! This has to change. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that children should limit TV time to 1-2 hours a day. Parents should also limit other "screen" time.

Many kids may balk at the idea of cutting TV time, but this must be done. Ask them to watch only the best shows. Do other fun things with the kids. Phase out the TV by cutting back a little at a time. Pretty soon kids will be finding fun things to do on their own.

Children should engage in some physical activity for 30 minutes or more each day, outside of school. PE in school is not enough.



Fun ideas for exercise:

- Miniature golf, kite flying, nature walks, or biking can be fun to do with your child.
- Have your kids help you paint a room, wash the car, or plant a garden. Learning to wash the dishes or bathe the dog burns some calories. Chores done with someone become less work and more fun.
- Activity doesn't have to cost much. Running, playing outside, or dancing to radio music are exercises that are easy for children. Take notice and praise when you see your child being active. An example: "You've been running around here like crazy. It's good to be able to work off steam like that!"
- Children will try many different activities while growing up. They may flit from Ping-Pong to baseball to scouting. Children need to try a number of sports and activities to find what suits them.
- For gifts, choose items that make movement fun: hula-hoops, bikes, basketballs, skates, swim fins, jump ropes, and punching bags. Even little toys like jacks and marbles help kids be active. Keep in mind that anything burns more calories than watching TV.
- Set a good example by being active yourself. The child will then see himself as part of an active family.
- On rainy days, use a dance video, take a walk in the mall, go bowling, or visit a museum.

Partial list of activities. Add others that your child likes.

Archery	Badminton	Chase
Darts	Frisbee	Gardening
Running	Hopscotch	Jumping jacks
Carpentry	Bowling	Bedmaking
Capture-the-flag	Kites	Swimming
Skating	Roller-blading	Snorkeling
Dancing	Tubing	Climbing
Basketball	Football	Wrestling
Kick-boxing	Judo	Kick-the-can
Hide and seek	Ride a scooter	Ping-Pong
Juggling	Gymnastics	Jump rope
Tumbling	Baby-sitting	Swinging
Play freeze-tag	Walking/Skipping	Baseball
Exercise machine	Soccer	T-ball
Play catch	Shoot baskets	Tennis
Vacuum	Clean a room	Rake leaves
Sweep the porch	Mow the yard	Pillow fight
Play w/ friends	Walk the dog	Bathe the dog
Wash the car	Wash the windows	Cheerleading

It's easy to get to 30 minutes a day if you turn off the TV!

Overweight children may feel awkward playing games or sports in which winning is important. If this seems to be the case, look for non-competitive activities like walking, playing in a pool, and biking.

We don't want to make exercise painful or embarrassing. If we can get kids moving in fun ways, they will not just be burning calories. They will also have a way to deal with stress.



Limit the time your children watch television.

THE kid's ACTIVITY PYRAMID

Each week you can have fun and be active by trying the following things...

With Friends

- Dance to music
- Play games like tag and hopscotch
- Join a sports team at school or the park

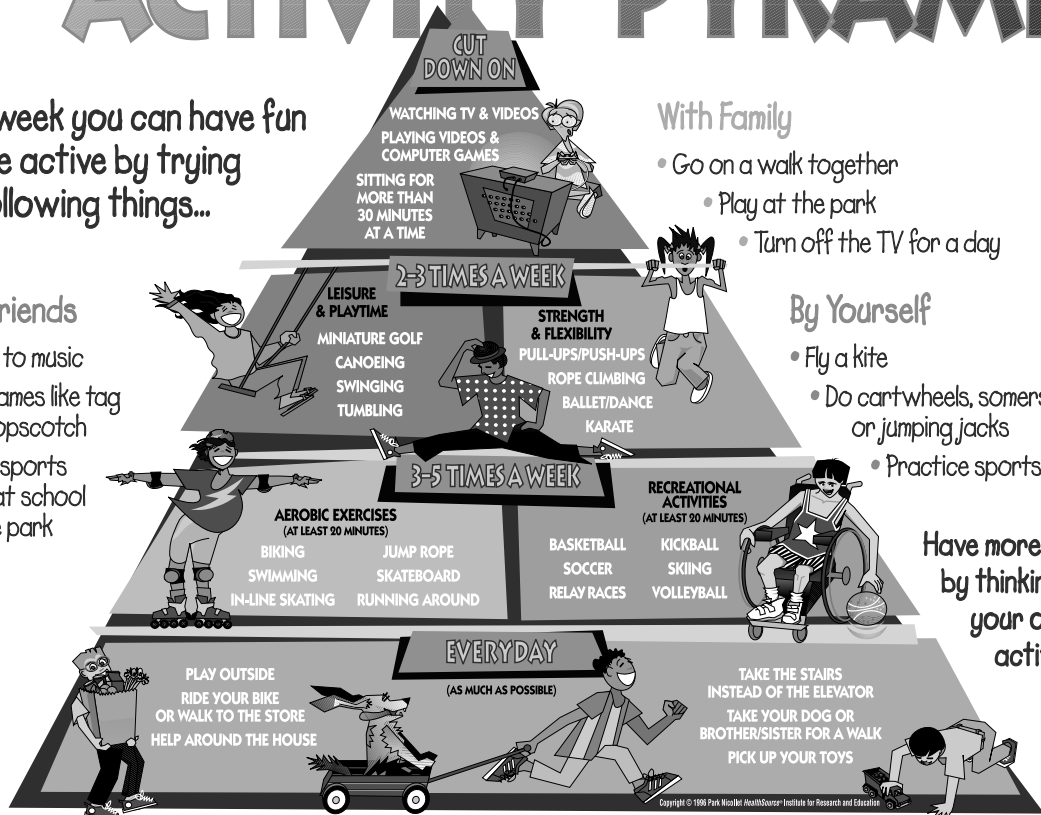
With Family

- Go on a walk together
- Play at the park
- Turn off the TV for a day

By Yourself

- Fly a kite
- Do cartwheels, somersaults or jumping jacks
- Practice sports skills

Have more fun by thinking up your own activities!



MAKING CHANGES

Change

The whole family should follow the same guidelines for eating and exercise. A child will learn what parents do, not what they say. It may be hard to make all these changes. Take them one at a time. Work on eating more fruit one week, cutting back TV the next week, taking walks the week after that. Make it a family project for good health. It may take a long time to make all the food and lifestyle changes. If you keep a scale at home, you may want to weigh each family member once a month. Do not weigh only the child. This puts too much pressure on her. Too much pressure can lead to conflict and possible eating disorders.

Keep it Positive

Heavy kids usually know they are overweight. They do not need to be reminded by parents. What they need is unconditional love and acceptance. Overweight kids get plenty of negative feedback from society and from their classmates. It's the parents' job to give lots of love and encouragement. Every time you see a child making a good food choice or doing something physical, let him know you notice and applaud his effort.

Kids have stress in their lives. Teach them helpful ways to deal with stress. Some children learn early to treat themselves with food when they are feeling blue. This leads to eating when they are not hungry, and that leads to excess weight gain.



Good ways to deal with stress.

- Talk to someone about problems—a parent, other relative, friend, or teacher.
- Exercise to let frustrations out.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Learn the difference between good and bad worries. Bad worries are things that one cannot change, like parents divorcing, world events seen on TV, or the death of a loved person or pet. Good worries are things we can do something about, like homework, getting to school on time, or getting along with people. Teach your child to work on the good worries, and to try to let the bad worries go.
- Hobbies like drawing, sewing, or woodwork can take our minds off our troubles and boost our self-esteem.
- Teach children to say "I feel" and "I need" so that feelings are not buried.
- Do not use food as a reward. This reinforces over-eating. If children are rewarded with food they will learn to use food to cope with stress.

People who eat more when they are stressed can become overweight.

- Find out if your child is worried about his weight. Heavy kids may be chosen last for teams. They may have a hard time finding clothes that fit. They may be bullied at school. Let your child know it is okay to talk about painful feelings.

Healthy Lifestyle Quiz

This quiz will help you know if your family is on the right track for good health

Does your family:

1. Eat meals together?
NO YES
2. Eat only when hungry?
NO YES
3. Avoid using food as a reward?
NO YES
4. Do physical activities together?
NO YES
5. Make mealtimes pleasant?
NO YES
6. Not insist on eating everything on the plate?
NO YES
7. Stay at the table longer than 15 minutes?
NO YES
8. Limit TV time to one hour per day?
NO YES
9. Make a point not to skip meals?
NO YES
10. Talk about feelings?
NO YES

Give yourself 10 points for every "yes" answer.
Work on the "no" answers to improve your score.
Small, steady changes will improve your family's eating and activity habits.

If you need more help making changes, let your doctor know. He or she can refer you to a dietitian or to a family counselor if your family needs extra help. Your doctor will support your efforts. Check with your doctor for advice about follow-up visits.



*“Make it a family project for good health.
It may take a long time to make all the
food and lifestyle changes.”*

RESOURCES

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Maintains a web site, www.familydoctor.org, which has news about research findings on obesity and health. There is info written for parents, teens, and younger children.

FAST FOOD FACTS, MARION FRANZ, RD.

A pocket-size book with calorie and fat contents of fast food.

FITTEEN.COM

A web site with excellent exercise and diet information for teens. It features recipes, exercises, workout and food diaries, and shopping hints. There is also info on eating disorders

FOODPLAY.COM

A web site with nutrition information and food activities to do with kids.

HOW TO GET YOUR KIDS TO EAT...BUT NOT TOO MUCH, ELLYN SATTER, RD. PALO ALTO CA: BULL PUBLISHING CO., 1987.

This is a book that teaches how to avoid food hassles, and how to let your children make their own choices about portions.

IAMBEAUTIFUL.COM

A web site with information to help girls and women achieve a positive body image and improve self-esteem.

JUST FOR KIDS!

A 10-week program at Austin Regional Clinic for children ages 9-12 to learn good eating and exercise habits to help control weight. Call ARC-INFO for more information.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

The Weight Control Information Network has info on helping your overweight child. Includes a section on how to help your child develop good attitudes toward eating. Www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs.htm

NUTRITIONFORKIDS.COM

A source for teaching nutrition to kids.

NOTES

NOTES