

HOW CAN I PREVENT MY CHILD FROM BECOMING OVERWEIGHT?

More children in America are becoming overweight. This is a serious health problem since there are many medical illnesses that are associated with increased weight. Children who are overweight can develop high blood pressure and diabetes just as adults do. Children also may have a more difficult time forming friendships and may be teased more by their peers. The good news is that there are simple things you and your family can do to help everyone develop a healthier lifestyle.

FOOD

As the parent, you probably do the shopping and food selection for your family. Be careful with your food purchases, and everyone in your family will benefit. You may also notice your food bill will decrease.

1. DO NOT BUY SODA
Just two sodas every day for one year will add 10 pounds to your child's weight.
2. DO NOT BUY JUICE
It is much better to eat fruit than drink fruit juice.
3. DO NOT BUY
 - C – cookies
 - C – candy
 - C – crackers
 - C – chips
 - C – cupcakes/cakes
 - C – cereals (sugary)
4. CHOOSE MORE fresh fruits and vegetables.
5. OFFER MORE:
chicken, turkey, fish
nonfat milk, Greek yogurt
baked, broiled, boiled foods
- OFFER LESS:
hot dogs, bologna, bacon, sausages
ice cream, cream cheese, chocolate milk
pan fried or deep-fat fried foods
6. Encourage your child to drink more water. Have a water bottle with you in the car or in your backpack.
7. Do not skip meals. Encourage our family to eat meals together at least once a day.
8. Eat breakfast. Allow enough time in your schedule each day for your child to have breakfast. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight. Breakfast should include protein, like eggs, cheese, beans, peanut or almond butter.
9. Do not use food as a reward. Do serve your meals on a smaller plate.
10. Eat more slowly. Encourage everyone in your family to chew their food more thoroughly and slow down between bites. It takes about 20 minutes for the brain to register the stomach is full.
11. Choose healthy foods for snacks. Although your child may not like it at first, he may learn to enjoy an apple, peanut butter and celery, popcorn, or string cheese for an after school snack.

ACTIVITY

Our lifestyles today have contributed to children's weight problems. Children do not walk as far and do not exercise as often as in the past. There are many ways that you can help your child (and your family) develop a more active and healthy life. Here are just a few ideas.

1. Walk around the block together before or after dinner.
2. Walk together to and from school.
3. Walk around while talking on your cell phone.
4. Jump rope outside for 10 minutes.
5. Climb the stairs inside or outside of your house 2 or 3 extra times every day.
6. Go to the park and play.
7. Enroll in an organized sport – SF Park and Recreation, Boys and Girls Club.
8. Encourage your child to play actively for 30 – 60 minutes each day.
9. Have your child help with family chores.
10. Ride your bikes, dance, play ball together.

TELEVISION / MEDIA

Children who watch television (or sit in front of a computer) are more likely to develop weight problems. There are many reasons for this. Children who watch television have a lower metabolic rate and so will not use many calories. They often eat while watching television – and what they eat is often not very nutritious, but is high in calories. Children who watch TV are obviously not doing other activities that help burn up calories. The following will help your family become healthier.

1. TURN OFF THE TELEVISION
 - a. Turn it off when no one is watching
 - b. Turn it off during mealtimes and during homework hours
2. ALLOW ONLY 1 HOUR (or less) of "SCREEN TIME" EVERY DAY ("Screen time includes television, videos, video and computer games")
 - a. Your child can earn the hour of screen time by exercising
 - b. You and your child can stand up and do "jumping jacks" during commercials
 - c. You and your child can do something active before or after the program.
3. DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO EAT WHILE WATCHING TV OR VIDEOS
4. DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO HAVE A COMPUTER OR TELEVISION IN THE BEDROOM

REMEMBER

FOODS

Choose them carefully

ACTIVITY

Increase your activity

TELEVISION

Turn it off

Used by permission: Jane E. Anderson, M.D. "Prescriptions for Parents"

