



Children's Health

Weight Control

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD MAINTAIN A NORMAL WEIGHT

Overeating and lack of exercise are partly to blame for the increase in childhood obesity in recent decades. Up to 85 percent of obese children will become obese adults. Rigid dieting is not the answer to overweight children because it can slow their growth. Generally, if your child eats a well-balanced diet, low in saturated fat and refined sugars, and if they exercise frequently, they shouldn't have a problem maintaining a healthy weight.

TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD EAT HEALTHILY

- Offer your child a variety of nutritious foods low in saturated fat, calories and sugar.
- Keep mealtime comfortable. Never force your child to eat. Never punish your child for not eating.
- Avoid using food as a reward.
- Allow and encourage your children to respond to their own hunger cues.
- Help your child understand that bodies come in different shapes and sizes. Striving for the "perfect" body is unhealthy and unrealistic.
- Be aware that soft drinks and some fruit juice products contain large amounts of sugar. Limit the amount of soft drinks your child drinks and read product labels to find juices that contain pure fruit juice.
- Encourage your children to drink eight or more glasses of water each day. Pep up the water by adding fancy ice cubes, lemon, lime or berry slices, or by squirting lemon or lime juice into the water.
- Keep fresh fruits, vegetables and nonfat yogurts available for snacks instead of junk food.
- Avoid feeding your child processed foods—they're usually high in saturated fat, calories and sodium.
- Serve air-popped popcorn instead of potato or corn chips.



TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE ACTIVE

- Take your child for regular bicycle rides or walks.
- Shoot baskets, play catch or take up a sport, such as roller skating, tennis, racquetball or swimming, with your child.
- Encourage your child to play organized sports, such as soccer, baseball, basketball or football.
- Make sure your child spends time outdoors playing with friends.
- Plan family outings that involve physical activity, such as hiking, backpacking and cross-country skiing.