



Little changes. Big rewards. Are you ready?



Every body needs a balance of nutritious foods and active living to achieve a healthy weight and prevent problems such as diabetes and heart disease. As a parent, you have the power to teach your children healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Here are some simple steps that can bring big rewards for your entire family.

Get moving

- Aim for at least 60 minutes of activity a day.
- Escape the pull of the couch—get up and get moving.

Pull the plug

- Limit screen time (TV, computers, and video games) to 1 to 2 hours a day.
- Move the TV out of the bedroom.

Eat smart

- Aim for 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- Fuel up with breakfast every morning.

Drink well

- Choose water or nonfat milk.
- Limit soda, sports drinks, juice, and sweetened drinks—one can is equal to drinking a candy bar!

An example of a healthy plate

- 1/2 fruits and vegetables
- 1/4 whole grains
- 1/4 lean protein



How can I help my child be as healthy as possible?

Enjoy family mealtime

- Start with a healthy breakfast every day, and create a family routine for meal and snack times.
- Eat together as a family when possible with the TV off.
- Be a role model for healthy eating, and have everyone eat the same foods—avoid preparing separate meals for your child.
- Make fruit the everyday dessert.

Let your child decide how much to eat

- You decide what is served; your child decides when he or she has had enough.
- Avoid comments about how much or what your child is eating.
- Growth slows during early school years—don't force bigger portions.

Plan ahead and keep healthy food within reach

- Stock a cupboard with healthy after-school snacks.
- Let your child shop and cook with you.

Offer a variety of healthy foods

- Serve brightly colored fruits and veggies—they tend to be more nutritious.
- Choose whole-grains (such as brown rice and pasta), whole wheat breads and low-sugar cereals most of the time.
- Shop for lean meats, trimming extra fat before serving.

Choose not to use sweets as rewards

- Reward instead with kind words and hugs, or non-food items like stickers.

Play hard and rest well!

- Set a good example, and enjoy active time with your family.
- Balance the activity with good sleep. Children and adults who sleep less tend to weigh more and have less energy for play.

Children come in all sizes

- **Body Mass Index (BMI)** looks at your child's height, weight, age and sex and plots it onto a growth chart. Children whose BMI is near the higher end of the growth chart (85th percentile and above) are considered to be at greater risk of diabetes and heart disease.
- However, BMI is only one of the tools used to determine if your child's weight is a healthy one; there are no "ideal" heights and weights for children.
- Let your children know you love them whatever their size.
- Avoid using words like "skinny" or "fat," or teasing them about their weight.
- Explain that you want them to be healthier, and that the whole family is going to work on improving everyone's eating and activity habits.

Online Resources:

- Resources right on your doctor's home page: kp.org/mydoctor
- Nutrition and activity tips and challenges: letsmove.gov
- Food and nutrition information: nutrition.gov
- USDA information and resources: choosemyplate.gov

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.