

# Parent Resources

## Childhood Obesity Concerns and Solutions

Estimates show that one in six children ages 6-10 are overweight and 15 percent of all children in the United States are overweight. Studies have shown a dramatic rise in the number of obese young people in America over the last few decades. Being overweight is twice as common among kids and teenagers as it was 20 years ago.

Being obese increases a child's risk for serious medical problems during childhood, such as:

- high blood pressure and cholesterol
- hip and other bone problems
- poor self-esteem
- liver problems
- early puberty
- diabetes
- sleep apnea and breathing problems
- gastrointestinal disease
- heart disease.

### What can you do to help your child?

- Do not use food as a comfort measure.
- Mealtime should be family time. Create a relaxed atmosphere around meals. Eat slowly, and enjoy your food. Eat together as a family, and do not watch television during meals.
- Keep only healthy foods in your home. Having junk food around for other family members and trying to police what your child eats only promotes sneak eating.

- Limit television viewing time. There is a direct relationship between the amount of time spent watching TV and the degree a person is overweight.
- Praise your child for healthy food choices and physical activity.
- Have structured mealtimes and snacks on a schedule. Model and insist on good meal habits. Eating less breakfast and more dinner or skipping breakfast increases the risk for obesity.
- Encourage physical activity. Make sure your child gets outside during daylight hours. This will encourage physical activity and will rule out the inactive pursuits of TV and other media.

### Snacking

Pay attention to snacks – they do count! Lots of snacking leads to a higher calorie intake, and many typical snack foods are not very nutritious. Keep healthy snacks on hand, and allow your child easy access to them. (Keep reading for an A-Z list of some healthy snacks.)

### Working as a team

Families are encouraged to tackle the problem together. Family members should try to be supportive, encourage healthy eating habits, encourage physical activity, discourage inactive pastimes and be positive role models.

When healthy eating and physical-activity habits are adopted together, the entire family will be healthier.

### Healthy Snacks A-Z

- A Apples, Apricots
- B Bananas, Bean Dip, Blueberry Bagels
- C Cantaloupe, Carrots, Cheese\*
- D Dried Cereal, Dried Fruit Chips
- E Eggs
- F Fig Cookies, Frozen Fruit Bars
- G Graham Crackers, Grapes
- H Honeydew Melon, Hot Chocolate\*
- I Iced Fruit (grapes or melon cubes)
- J Juices (100% juice), Jell-O with Fruit
- K Kiwi, Krispy Rice Treats
- L Low-fat Pudding\*
- M Milk\*, Muffins\*, Mangoes
- N Nectarines, Nuts
- O Orange Wedges, Oatmeal
- P Pasta, Peaches, Pita Bread
- Q Quick Carrot Sticks
- R Raisins, Rice Cakes
- S Strawberries
- T Tortillas w/Filling, Trail Mix
- U Unbuttered Popcorn
- V Vanilla Wafers
- W Watermelon
- X eXciting Fruits & Veggies
- Y Yogurt
- Z Zucchini Slices

\*Use low-fat versions



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