

Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

(For parents with children 0-4 years old)



Offer small portions of healthy foods and let your child decide how much to eat at each meal

Did You Know?

- Children know **how much** they need to eat. They do not know **what kinds** of food they need to eat. **Parents** should decide what foods to give and when.
- Children are born with the ability to know when they are full. Small children can lose that ability over time when parents encourage them to overeat.
- Small children change their minds about what they like to eat. The foods they like one day may be different the next day – it is important to keep offering healthy foods.
- It may take 10 tries or more before your child will like a healthy food.
- Children who eat more meals together with their family are more likely to eat healthy foods.

Tips for Parents

- *You are the most important role model for your child. Let your child see you eating small portions of healthy foods. Your child will want to eat what you eat.*
- *Start with small portions and let your child ask for more if he is still hungry.*
- *Do not comfort your child by feeding him. Comfort your child by cuddling, walking with or singing to him.*
- *Make a schedule for meals and snacks and try to stick to it each day. Children like this kind of routine and will be less likely to overeat.*
- *Do not praise your child for finishing everything on her plate. Praise your child for trying new vegetables, fruits and other healthy foods.*
- *Turn off the TV during meals and eat together as a family.*



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Increase your child's daily physical play and physical activity

Did You Know?

- Your baby's brain grows quickly in the first year of life. Learning starts with **PLAY!**
- Your child needs physical play and activity **EVERY DAY** from the time he is born.
- Playing with your baby helps her to grow stronger, smarter, healthier and happier.
- Play and physical activity helps your child sleep better at night.
- Active children are less likely to become overweight.
- Toddlers need at least **30 minutes** of structured activity (like practice walking, climbing, stretching) and **one hour** of supervised free play every day.

Tips for Parents

- *You are the most important role model for your child. Let your child see YOU being physically active every day.*
- *Find ways to exercise as a family - take your child for a walk every day.*
- *Schedule time each day to play with your child.*
- *Keep it fun. Think of new play activities that you both can enjoy.*
- *Limit baby's time in swing, stroller, or bouncer seat to less than thirty minutes a day.*
- *Try these activities*

Infants:

Peek-a-boo
Hide-and-seek
Pat-a-cake
Baby massage and stretch

Toddlers:

Dance to music
Follow-the-Leader
Hide-and-seek
Make Believe

Preschoolers:

Freeze Dance
Hopscotch
Jump rope
Hide-and-seek
Leap Frog
Scavenger Hunt



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Increase YOUR daily physical activity

Did You Know?

- Exercising 30 minutes or more most days of the week will help you to:
 - Burn calories and control your weight
 - Lower your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease
 - Feel better
- If YOU exercise, your child is more likely to.
- Children whose parents are overweight have an 80% chance of being overweight.

Tips for Success

- Start slowly! If 30 minutes is too much, exercise 3 times per day for 10 minutes, and slowly add time to each session.
- Exercise with a friend or family member.
- Pick an exercise that you like.
- Use a calendar to schedule time for you and for your whole family to exercise together – then track the time you spend being active.
- Make exercise a part of your daily routine.
- Drink lots of water before, during, and after exercising.

How to Exercise

1. Warm up for 5-10 minutes

- If you are walking, start by slowly walking in place.
- Now stretch your muscles. Choose stretches that use the same muscles you will use during your exercise.

2. Exercise

- Pick an exercise that keeps you moving; like walking, running, or swimming.
- You should be able to talk while exercising.
 - If you can sing while you exercise, work a little harder.
 - If you are out of breath, slow down a little.

3. Cool down for 5 minutes

- Slow down little by little.
- Stretch the muscles that you used while exercising. Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds.

Always talk to your doctor before starting to be sure your exercise program is safe for you.

