

# Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids

## For parents with children 0-4 years old

### Did You Know?


- The number of overweight children 2-5 years old in the US has doubled in the last 30 years.
- The number of overweight children 6-11 years old has tripled in the last 30 years.
- In California, 1 out of every 3 children is overweight.
- Overweight children are more likely to have health problems including:
  - Diabetes
  - Asthma
  - High Blood Pressure
  - High Cholesterol
  - Depression




**A**s a parent of a child 0-4 years old, there are key steps you can take to prevent your child from becoming overweight. Helping your child means changing the way **YOU** and your family eat, exercise and spend time together.

Success begins with **YOU**, the parent, leading a healthy lifestyle. Your children learn from watching what you do.

### Follow these Key Steps:

 **Breastfeed your baby for at least six months without other foods or liquids.**

 **Limit “junk foods” to once in a while and give water instead of juice, soda and other sweet drinks.**

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

 **Increase your child’s daily physical play and physical activity.**

 **Increase **YOUR** daily physical activity.**

 **Decrease screen time (TV, videos, computer, etc).**

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# Breastfeed your baby for at least 6 months without other foods or liquids

## Did You Know?

- Babies who are breastfed have less chance of being overweight as children.
- Breast milk burns calories for moms and shrinks the uterus, so moms get in shape more quickly.
- Breast milk can protect babies from infections – breastfed babies have fewer ear infections and are sick less often.
- Breast milk is easiest for babies to digest – breastfed babies are less likely to have diarrhea or constipation.
- Breast milk is best for baby's brain and overall development.
- Breast milk is free and is always safe with no bottles to prepare or refrigerate.
- Breastfeeding does not cause breast sagging, pregnancy does.
- Breastfeeding helps develop strong mother-child relationships.
- Families who breastfeed save money on food and healthcare costs.

## Tips for Parents

- *Breastfeed whenever your baby seems hungry – and stop when baby seems full (turns head away from breast, stops sucking). Babies are born with the ability to know when they are full.*
- *Find a quiet place in your home to breastfeed – if you are able to relax and enjoy this time it will be easier on you and on your baby.*
- *Be patient – it is not always easy – but worth the effort!*
- *Join a breastfeeding support group.*
- *Talk to your baby's doctor or visit [www.breastfeeding.org](http://www.breastfeeding.org) if you have any questions about breastfeeding or to find a support group in your area.*



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Limit “junk foods” to once in a while and give water instead of juice, soda and other sweet drinks

## Did You Know?

- Your child learns from watching you – be a good role model - choose healthy foods and drink water yourself.
- Eating more vegetables and fruits and less junk food is very important for your child's early brain development and intelligence.
- If you offer your small child a mix of vegetables and fruits, he will learn to eat them. If you give your small child sweet or salty foods, he will be less likely to eat the healthy foods.
- Giving your child juice makes her less hungry for healthy foods at mealtime and more likely to choose sweet foods over healthy foods.
- Juice and other sweet drinks can cause cavities and tooth decay, stomach problems, low bone density as well as overweight kids.

## Tips for Parents

- *If YOU eat less junk food and drink more water, your child will want to do the same.*
- *If you don't keep junk foods in your house, it will be easier not to eat them.*
- *Always give water instead of juice with meals or snacks and between meals. Your child is more likely to enjoy water if you offer it regularly.*
- *If your child does not like a new vegetable or fruit the first time, try it again later and then again.*
- *Buy and serve a mix of fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned). Let your child help choose them at the store.*

