



Childhood Obesity

Do you know when to be concerned about your child's weight? Of course, all children gain weight as they grow older. But extra pounds — more than what's needed to support their growth and development — can lead to childhood obesity. While there's no doubt genetics plays a role, genes alone can't account for the huge increase in rates over the past few decades. Obesity in kids is now epidemic in the United States. The prevalence of obesity among children aged 6 to 11 more than doubled in the past 20 years, going from 6.5% in 1980 to 17.0% in 2006. The rate among adolescents aged 12 to 19 more than tripled; increasing from 5% to 17.6%. The increase is in both children and adolescents, and in all age, race and gender groups. The number of children who are overweight has doubled in the last two to three decades; currently one child in five is overweight. Childhood obesity is a serious medical condition that affects children and adolescents. It occurs when a child is well above the normal weight for his or her age and height. Childhood obesity is particularly troubling because the extra pounds often start kids on the path to health problems that were once confined to adults, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Obese children now have diseases like type 2 diabetes that used to only occur in adults. Overweight kids tend to become overweight adults, continuing to put them at greater risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke. Perhaps more devastating to an overweight child than the health problems is the social discrimination from others. Children who are teased a lot can develop low self-esteem and depression.

Obesity is different from being overweight, which means weighing too much. Both terms mean that a person's weight is greater than what is considered healthy for his or her height. Children grow at different rates, so it isn't always easy to know when a child is obese or overweight. Ask your doctor to measure your child's height and weight to determine if he or she is in a healthy range. If a weight-loss program is necessary, involve the whole family in healthy habits so your child doesn't feel singled out. The main culprits are the same as those for adult obesity: eating too much and moving around too little. The goals are to reduce obesity and the risk of heart disease by encouraging nutritious eating habits and regular physical activity. You can encourage healthy eating by serving more fruits and vegetables and buying fewer sodas and high-calorie, high-fat snack foods. Physical activity can also help your child overcome obesity or being overweight. Kids need about 60 minutes each day. Kids may go on field trips to local grocery stores and restaurants to learn how to make healthy selections and read food labels. They might participate in soccer, tennis, basketball, bowling, swimming, or hiking. One of the best strategies to combat excess weight in your child is to improve the diet and exercise levels of your entire family. This helps protect the health of your child now and in the future.

While children can play ball at the local park and choose healthier foods in school, at the end of the day family support is what really counts. You are a role model for your kids. Children form habits from parents, and usually maintain them into adulthood. If your children see you reach for a banana instead of a brownie, they are likely to do the same. If they see you go for a walk or wash the car, they may join in. If you're concerned your child may be overweight, talk with their doctor. A health care professional can measure your child's height and weight and calculate a ratio known as body mass index (BMI). This number is compared to a growth chart for children of your kid's age and gender to determine whether his or her weight is in a healthy range.



Exercise Tip of the Month

5 Simple Steps to keep your kids happy and healthy

Lets face it: kids are cruel. And being an overweight kid is almost sure to be painful. The clothes other kids wear don't fit. Gym class is embarrassing. Friends are few and far between. The other kids are mean.

1. Face the facts.

If your kid is gaining weight for two years, it's not baby fat. Talk to the family doctor for a weight loss plan and healthy eating advice.

2. Get the whole family involved.

Everyone should eat healthier, so get everyone interested in healthy meals that taste good,.

3. Eat as a family--at the dinner table.

That way you can watch what everyone eats and guide the kids into eating **well-balanced** meals. Even snacks should be structure "sit down" events. Food eaten on the run is fast forgotten.

4. Make it fun.

Nutrition can be fun--especially with tan ice cream machine. **Kids can make** their own low-fat ice cream treats and add little goodies like nuts, candy cane pieces and brownie bits--in moderation!

5. Unplug!

Turn off the TV and the computer for healthy activities like biking, walking, ping pong, bowling--varies the plan and is creative. It's a great way to get to know your kids better, too.

Snacking Tips for Kids

- Discourage eating meals or snacks while watching TV. Eating in front of the TV may make it difficult to pay attention to feelings of fullness and may lead to overeating.
- Buy fewer high-calorie, low-nutrient foods. Help children understand that sweets and high-fat treats (such as candy, cookies, or cake) are not everyday foods. Don't deprive children of occasional treats, however. This can make them more likely to overeat.
- Avoid labeling foods as "good" or "bad." All foods in moderation can be part of a healthy diet.
- Involve children in planning, shopping, and preparing meals. Use these activities to understand children's food preferences, teach children about nutrition, and encourage them to try a wide variety of foods.
- Make the most of snacks. Continuous snacking may lead to overeating. Plan healthy snacks at specific times. Include two food groups, for example, apple wedges and whole grain crackers. Focus on maximum nutrition - fruits, vegetables, grains, low-sugar cereals, lowfat dairy products, and lean meats and meat alternatives. Avoid excessive amounts of fruit juices, which contains calories, but fewer nutrients than the fruits they come from. A reasonable amount of juice is 4-8 ounces per day.
- Encourage physical activity. Participate in family physical activity time on a regular basis, such as walks, bike rides, hikes, and active games. Support your children's organized physical activities. Provide a safe, accessible place outside for play.



Chocolate Dipped Strawberries

Ingredients

16 ounce carton fresh strawberries
1/2 cup semisweet mini chocolate chips

Preparation.

Remove the stems from the strawberries. Wash the berries under the cold water and dry well with paper towels. Set aside.

Place the chocolate chips in a microwave safe bowl and microwave on high for 30 seconds. Stir well and repeat 2-3 more times until the chips are melted. Be careful not to overheat.

Divide the melted chocolate into small bowls. Let each family member dip their own strawberries.

Note: Don't stop at Strawberries. Try pineapple, bananas, grapes.

Nutritional Information

110 calories per cup
3 grams fiber
17 grams carbohydrate
6 grams fat

Grape Nuts Chicken Salad

Ingredients

12 ounces chopped chicken breast
2/3 seedless green grapes, quartered
1/3 cup pecans, toasted and chopped
1/2 cup light mayonnaise
1/2 tsp dried tarragon
1/4 tsp salt
Pepper
2 whole wheat pitas, halved

Preparation

Combine the chicken, grapes, pecans, mayonnaise, tarragon, salt, and pepper to taste in a large bowl and mix well.

Add the chicken mixture to each pita half and serve. (or serve without the pita!)

Yield

4 servings (1/2 pita each)

Nutritional Information

380 calories
17 fat grams
31 grams protein

Louisiana Center for Weight Loss Surgery

Calendar of Events:

****Support Group****

Thursday, August 21 2008

P&S Surgical Hospital

Ste 405-A

5:30pm

Call 998-8162 for more information



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