

Health Lifestyle Recommendations and Strategies for Success

Eat a nutritious breakfast every day.

- Eating breakfast may reduce snacking and fat intake during the rest of the day.
- Get up a little earlier so that you will have time to prepare and eat breakfast.
- Offer fruits first, then whole grains.
- Don't buy cereals that have added sugar (it's okay to add fruit or a little sugar to cereal).

Eat fewer foods that are high in fat and calories.

- Give overweight and obese children lowfat milk after age 1 and nonfat milk after age 2. Lowfat and nonfat milk have a little more calcium per cup than does whole milk.
- Foods with high water content, such as soups, fruits and vegetables, tend to have fewer calories per unit and can make children feel satisfied without adding unnecessary calories and fat to the diet.
- Drink less 100-percent fruit juice. While fruit juice contains many important nutrients, it is also high in calories. Drinking too much fruit juice may contribute to weight gain.

Plan healthy snacks and meals

- Eating regular, healthy meals and snacks is key to a healthy lifestyle.
- Plan ahead and make fruit or raw mixed nuts available for snacking (but do not give nuts to children under 4 years of age because they may choke).
- Eat meals as a family, and don't eat while watching television.

Minimize sugar-sweetened beverages.

- Drinking too many sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda or juice drinks, can contribute to weight gain. For example, drinking one soda each day adds enough extra calories to result in a 10-pound weight gain each year.
- Water is the most important nutrient. Pack water instead of juice boxes for lunches, sports or travel.

Limit meals away from home.

- The more meals you eat at home, the more fruits and vegetables (and the less soda) you will consume. Eating out at fast food restaurants has been linked to obesity in children.

- Plan ahead. Prepare meals over the weekend that can be reheated during the week when you have less time.
- Learn how to prepare your favorite foods with more healthful ingredients.
- Cook with your children and have them help clean up after meals.
- Don't eat in front of the television. To make mealtimes fun, have a collection of conversation starting questions on hand.

Serve appropriate portion sizes.

- Portion sizes are different for people of different genders and sizes. See <http://www.mypyramid.gov> for portion sizes adjusted for age, gender, weight and height.
- Your fist is approximately the size of one portion of vegetables, fruit or pasta for you. Your palm is about the right size portion of protein for you.

Limit screen time (combined time watching television, playing video games, and using the computer to less than 2 hours a day for children over age 2, and to none to children under age 2.

- Time spent watching television, playing video games, and using the computer can decrease the amount of time spent on physical activity.
- Remove television sets from children's bedrooms.
- Set up a timer to sound when your child's screen time is up.
- Choose what shows to watch as a family, and shut the television off when your show is over.

Increase active time for children and families to at least 60 minutes each day.

- Incorporate exercise into your daily routine by walking to school, taking the stairs, or finding way to move for fun (dancing, jumping rope, playing active games).
- Advocate for quality physical education in your school.
- Organize active play dates with friends.