

Childhood Obesity

One in three adolescents are either overweight or obese in this country. A child is considered obese if their weight is at least 10% higher than what is recommended for their height and body type. Studies have shown that a child who is obese between the ages of 10 and 13 has an 80% chance of becoming an obese adult.

Top 5 Tips to Get Your Kids Eating Healthy

1. Teach your kids about nutrition from a very early age. Even though you think they don't understand, they do, and it sinks in.
2. Parents must be role models and involve children in meal-planning and grocery shopping. This helps them learn about different foods and gives them a role in the decision-making.
3. Make it fun! Get the kids in the kitchen whenever possible. Ask them what they like and talk about specific foods that are good or not-so-good for them.
4. Keep healthy snacks on hand in proper portions. Good options include fruits and vegetables, low-fat milk, smoothies, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, frozen fruit juice bars, whole grain crackers, etc.
5. Limit time at the computer, watching television, or playing video games. Try using a kitchen timer and when 20 minutes is up, it's time to go outside!

Poor eating habits contribute largely to childhood obesity. Be persistent, but not insistent, in offering healthy foods to your kids, according to registered dietician Diane Henderiks.

What Moms Can Do about Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is common because of the large portions we eat, too much calorie consumption, and not enough exercise, according to pediatrician Dr. Cara Natterson. She explains that it's important to set household rules to help fight obesity, and provides the following suggestions.

Put computers in the kitchen or a space where kids can be monitored. Allow them two hours of "screen time" daily -- this includes the computer, television, video games, iPods, etc.

Apply the same rules to everyone in the house, not just the child or teen that is struggling with obesity. Everyone has the same amount of screen time and exercise time, and everyone eats similar foods. Make this a family pact so as not to alienate your obese child.

Create activity times with Mom and Dad. One day a week, Dad takes the kids out for a physical activity, and another day Mom does it. Kids don't want to be fat, but oftentimes, they are too young to join a gym. Demonstrate the importance of physical activity by joining in.

Remove soda and junk food from the household. Create a healthy family environment for everyone.

Limit fast food, take-out, and eating out. Prepare foods at home as a family. Eat a diet rich in calcium and fiber, and limit the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Enforce a rule of one hour of physical activity per day. (Otherwise, they won't receive their screen time.)

Most importantly, create an environment that supports and encourages healthy choices.

Connect with Other Moms about Childhood Obesity

Join the conversation:

- [Is Your Child Overweight or Obese?](#)
- [Why Is My Kid Fat?](#)
- [Get My Kid to Exercise](#)

Related Momlogic Stories on Childhood Obesity

1. [Wake Up! Our Kids are FAT ... Fix It!](#)
2. [Commercials Making Kids Fat?](#)
3. [Note From School: Your Kid's Fat!](#)

Additional Resources for Childhood Obesity

- [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [American Obesity Association](#)