

If your child has a weight problem, they need your support.

If your doctor tells you that your kids are overweight or obese, let them know they're loved, regardless of their weight. Now, more than ever, they need help from their parents.

Start by letting kids know they're not alone, and tell them to set a goal to eat healthier and be more active. Make it fun for the family. Here's an easy way to remember healthy habits: 5-2-1-0. That's five fruits and veggies a day, two hours or less of screen time, one hour of active play and zero sweetened drinks.

Tips from the Good Health Club:

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Stretch

This tall, cool gal is here to say, "Eat five fruits and veggies every day!"

- Give kids 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Prepare more meals at home, as a family.
- Prevent diabetes, heart disease and many forms of cancer with a diet rich in fruits and veggies.

Hoot

Hoot's wise advice is to get out and play, "Turn off the TV and computer—get moving today!"

- Limit screen time (TV, video games, computers) to 2 hours or less per day.
- Avoid putting a TV in your child's bedroom.
- Encourage children to be physically active before allowing screen time.

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Spark

Spark has just one rhyme she likes to say, "Take an hour each day to go out and play!"

- Get at least 1 hour of physical activity each day.
- Plan family walk time after dinner.
- Encourage kids to join a school sports team, club or dance class.

Flip

This thirsty frog says what he thinks, "Stick with water and skip the sweet drinks!"

- Avoid serving soft drinks or sweetened drinks to kids.
- Encourage water between meals because it helps kids feel full.
- Add fruit like lemons or limes to your water for better flavor.



Outrun Obesity

Help Kids Get on a Healthy Track with the Good Health Club

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Your child could be at risk. Find out why, and learn what you can do about it.



Sources: Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Review provided by leading experts:
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Diabetes Association



A nonprofit corporation and independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Childhood obesity is a serious problem for kids like yours.

Obesity is on the rise for American kids. In fact, there are almost three times as many obese kids ages 6 to 19 as there were 30 years ago, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Some experts believe if obesity among children continues to increase, your children's generation will become the first in American history to have a shorter life than their parents.

Obesity leads to major illness.

Your obese child or teen is at risk for health problems during their youth and as adults. They're more likely to develop heart disease and diabetes — two leading causes of death in the United States. They're also more likely to get asthma, liver degeneration and sleep apnea. Obesity is a leading cause of preventable death in America, second only to smoking, according to the CDC.

Obesity can also cause your kids to face psychological and social problems. They can be teased and face discrimination. That, in turn, can cause low self-esteem and hurt their schoolwork and social skills, even as an adult.

Chances are your overweight kid will stay that way as an adult.

One U.S. Surgeon General study shows that if your child was overweight between ages 10 and 15, he or she would have a 70 percent chance of still being obese at 25. Another study found that if your child was overweight before the age of 8, obesity as an adult is likely to be worse.

Know for sure if your child is at risk.

Weight problems in children and adolescents are generally caused by not being active, not eating well, or a combination of the two, according to the U.S. Surgeon General. Genetics and lifestyle affect your child's weight, too.

Take a closer look at your child. Watch his or her habits at home. Talk to your doctor to determine if your child is overweight.

Understanding BMI

"Obesity" and "overweight" rankings for your child can be found by using weight and height to calculate the Body Mass Index (BMI). The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend using it to screen for obesity, overweight, healthy weight or underweight children. BMI is a reliable way to measure body fat for most children and teens even though it does not measure body fat directly. For children and teens, BMI is age and gender specific. Find out more at: www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children.

Get a quick sense of where your child stands.

While waiting to see the doctor, take a moment to answer questions 1–10 with your child. These answers will help you determine if your child may be at risk.

1. Does your child eat five or more fruits and vegetables per day? Yes No
2. Does your child have a favorite fruit or vegetable that they eat every day? Yes No
3. Does your child eat breakfast five times a week or more? Yes No
4. Does your child watch TV, videos or play computer games for two hours or less per day? Yes No
5. Does your child take gym class or participate in sports or dance in or outside of school three or more times a week? Yes No
6. Does your child have a favorite sport or physical activity that they love to do? Yes No
7. Does your child eat dinner at the table with the family at least once a week? Yes No
8. Is your child's room a "TV-free zone?" Yes No
9. Does your child eat meals at the table with the TV turned off? Yes No
10. Does your child drink water instead of soda, juice or other sweetened drinks? Yes No

How do they score?

Add up the number of times you answered "No" to see where your child's risk level is.

- 1 – 5 "No's"  Low to Medium Risk
- 6 – 8 "No's"  High Risk
- 9 – 10 "No's"  Very High Risk