



CONTACT NEMS

1-888-500-1886

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### IS MY CHILD OVERWEIGHT? WHAT IS OBESITY?

Overweight and obesity are weight ranges that are higher than what is healthy for a person's height. It is typically caused by an unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity. Sometimes being overweight or obese can run in families. Being overweight can increase your child's risk for further medical problems. About 1 in 5 children in America are overweight.

### WHAT MAKES OBESITY HARMFUL?

Overweight children are at increased risk for serious illnesses like diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and liver disease. They get tired easily because they are carrying extra weight, which makes it hard to get enough exercise. Overweight children are more likely to snore, which can lead to poor sleep, tiredness, and poor school performance. They can be teased by other children, leading to low self-esteem or depression.

#### Sources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases: Weight-control Information Network
- National Cancer Institute

### HOW MUCH WEIGHT SHOULD MY CHILD LOSE?

Most school age children do not need to lose weight. They need to keep the same weight and grow taller, which leans them out. Older kids and teens who may not grow taller should discuss an individual goal with their doctor.

### WHAT FOOD SHOULD WE AVOID?

These foods should be a rare treat and not eaten daily:

- Soda, juice, flavored teas and milks, or any sweetened drinks
- Fried or greasy foods
- Junk food: chips, candy, cookies, sugary cereals, cakes, pastries, ice cream
- Fast food and take out
- Butter, vegetable or peanut oils, mayonnaise
- Canned or preserved foods

### WHAT FOODS SHOULD WE EAT INSTEAD?

- Water or reduced fat milk
- Low fat yogurts and cheeses
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains breads, pastas, and cereals
- Lean meats, like chicken and turkey, or fish
- Healthy snack foods: pretzels, carrots sticks, crackers, sorbet



Please note that this information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to replace the advice of a health care professional. North East Medical Services disclaims any liability for the decisions you make based on this information.



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### PARENTING TIPS

As an adult and a caretaker, you must provide your child with healthy food options and set limits on unhealthy foods. Continue to offer three healthy meals and two snacks every day.

Remember:

- Do not buy unhealthy foods.
- Eat healthier food as a family. Don't force your child to be the only one who changes what they eat.
- Eat meals as a family on a reasonable schedule. Dinner time should be around 5pm to 7pm.
- Do not skip meals. Encourage your child to eat breakfast every day.
- Provide more healthy home cooked foods.
- Eat less take out and fast food.
- Do not use food as a reward.
- Talk to your child about the importance of eating healthy.
- Make sure your child knows you love them no matter what they look like. The goal is not to be thin, but HEALTHY.

### HOW CAN I INCREASE MY CHILD'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

- Most children should exercise for 30-60 minutes every day. This can include:
  - Walking to school, library, or store instead of driving,
  - Visiting parks and playgrounds
  - Climbing the stairs inside or outside the house a few extra times per day
  - Helping with household chores
  - Riding a bike, climbing a jungle gym, jumping rope, playing hopscotch, bouncing a ball, dancing, or playing catch. The possibilities are endless!
- Exercise together as a family.
- Encourage your child to join a sports team or afterschool program.
- Limit TV, video games, and computer time to less than 2 hours each day.
- Remove the TV from your child's bedroom.
- Decrease exposure to TV ads for unhealthy drinks and snacks.
- Do not let your child eat in front of the TV. When they are distracted, they tend to eat more.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY DOCTORS?

- Scheduled appointments for weight checks
- Dietary education about healthy food choices and portion sizes. This can include help from our nutritionists.
- Specific recommendations for increased exercise
- Screening for high blood pressure, and other complications
- Some children with more severe problems might need blood tests, or specialist doctors

**Speak to your pediatrician for more information.**

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