

Nutrition for your Child: Ten Steps to a Healthy Weight

1 **Limit time spent in sedentary activities**, including television, video games and computer play. Kids already spend a significant portion of their day sitting down during the school day.

2 **Encourage your child** to be involved in active play at least one hour a day. You will notice better behavior, too, when your child is allowed to “spend his energy.”

3 **Be an advocate for daily physical activity** at school. Encourage school personnel to promote active play at recess and daily physical education classes, if possible. Kids who can release energy through activity perform better in the classroom.

4 **Does your kitchen need an overhaul?** Take a close look at pantry shelves, cupboards, the refrigerator and freezer. What are the first foods you see? Are you tempted by high calorie, low nutrition “snack” foods or are there plenty of nutritious choices? Can you look around your kitchen and easily find the ingredients for four or five healthful meals? After you do this visual inventory, make a list of staple ingredients needed to stock a healthful kitchen.

5 **“Merchandise” healthy food choices.** What you see is what you will eat. Set out a big bowl of fruit or cut-up veggies, display finger string cheese and low-fat yogurt in a visible place in the refrigerator, and stock the snack cupboard with *whole-grain* crackers, air-popped popcorn or pretzels.

6 **Plan weekly menus.** It may sound boring but putting a little thought and planning into mealtime generally yields big health (and economic) advantages.

7 **Make better choices when eating out.** Many of the major restaurant chains publish nutrition information about their menu items. Either ask for a nutrition brochure or access the information online.

8 **Tempt hungry kids with healthy snacks.** Kids often have extra large appetites after school, before bed or following sports practice. Be sure to set out nutritious “grab foods” such as cut-up veggies and fruit, baked tortilla chips with salsa, or string cheese and whole-grain crackers.

9 **Limit the amount of “liquid calories”** available such as soda pop, fruit drinks and other sweetened beverages. Encourage kids to drink water, milk, or sugar-free drinks.

10 **Resist the temptation of making every activity and eating activity.** Food is available virtually everywhere you go these days, whether it’s a sporting event, movie or a trip to the gas station! Eat before you go or pack your own healthy snacks.

#1 Tip for Parents:
Kids are watching you! By role modeling positive nutrition and activity habits, you are sure to improve your family’s health.