

Healthy Eating and Healthy Weight for the Whole Family

The topic of healthy eating and healthy weight can be overwhelming. Taking in all of the information and putting it into practice may seem like a huge task.

To make it easier, here are 10 basic habits that will provide you with a healthier lifestyle. Choose one habit at a time and focus on it for 2 weeks, until it becomes your own. Then move on to another; check each off as you go. The more good habits you and your family form, the healthier your family will become!

- _____1. **Have at least 30 minute of exercise or active play EVERY day. One hour is better.**
- _____2. **Lead a more active lifestyle.** Take the stairs; park at the far edge of the parking lot. Ride bikes on weekends. Join a sports team.
- _____3. **Limit soft drinks, koolaid, fruit punch, and other sugar laden drinks to one serving per day. Only three servings per week is better. Drink water or sugar free beverages.**
- _____4. **Drink skim milk and limit fruit juice.** An appropriate amount of skim milk is a one cup per serving, 3-4 times per day. Fruit juice is acceptable, but limit total juice to ½ to 1 cup per day.
- _____5. **Have 3 meals and 2-3 snacks per day.** Have these meals and snacks at set times. Avoid “grazing”, or snacking constantly throughout the day.
- _____6. **Reduce fast food consumption or make better choices.** A good meal for a child is: Small hamburger, small fry, water; or 2 regular tacos, water; or grilled chicken sandwich, water; or 6 “subway sandwich”, baked chips, water. If this is not filling enough, plan on fresh fruit, veggie sticks, yogurt, etc. when you get home.
- _____7. **Make healthier snack substitutions:** chocolate teddy grahams for Oreos, low fat granola bars for candy bars, pretzels or air popped popcorn for potato chips, fruit and juice bars for ice cream, skim milk with one spoon of chocolate syrup for soda.
- _____8. **Extra snacks must be from the fruit or vegetable group.** Many of us do not eat enough of these foods. If you are hungry after all meals and snacks for the day are eaten, try apple slices, frozen grapes, carrot sticks, etc.
- _____9. **Learn appropriate portions.** Most Americans eat MUCH larger portions of food than appropriate. The amount of food that can fit into the cupped palm of your hand is a good serving size.
- _____10. **Expand your interests and hobbies.** People who are busy focus more on “living life” than on food. Keep a list of “things to do” instead of eating for boredom.