



Simple Steps to a Healthy Weight for Children

1. Be active by playing together inside and outside.

For a healthy weight, kids and adults need 30 to 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Play with your kids every day – fun for them, fun for you too!

- Play inside: Turn off the TV and play an old-fashioned game of hide-and-seek. Clear a space for wiggling, dancing, and playing with soft-foam balls or squishy toys.
- Play outside: The options for outdoor play are unlimited: bikes, trikes, scooters, balls, kites, Frisbees, jump ropes, squirt guns, hula-hoops, hopscotch, and tag.

2. Make family meals a special time to eat together.

Eating more meals together can make a big difference in your family's health, happiness, and finances. Dinners at home are easier (and cheaper) than you think!

- Plan a weekly menu: Make it simple or make it detailed – the key is to have a plan. Involve the whole family; let each person have a night to pick their favorite dishes.
- Cook once, eat twice: Cut down on prep time. Cook and freeze key ingredients, like ground beef for tacos and spaghetti sauce, or main dishes, like lasagna and casseroles.

3. Save fast food for a once or twice a week treat.

Fast food is often loaded with calories, fat, and sugar. Whether you drive-thru or go inside, here are some smart tips to help you eat better in the fast food lane.

- Share a super size: There's a way to make mega portions work for you: share them! By sharing a large order of fries, you eat fewer calories, less fat, and save money too.
- Choose nutrient-rich options: Many national chains now offer tasty, fun choices in kids' meals – like flavored milk instead of pop and mandarin oranges instead of fries.

4. Enjoy tasty fruit and veggie snacks together.

Serve a rainbow of produce every day – at least 5 juicy, crunchy, crispy, tasty fruits and vegetables. Fresh, frozen, dried, canned, and juice – they all count for good health!

- Enjoy green fruits and veggies: For snacks or dinner, green comes in dozens of delicious flavors – like sliced kiwi fruit or broccoli trees with light Ranch dip.
- Enjoy red fruits and veggies: Red is a tasty color for produce – any time of day! Try frozen berries, watermelon, or canned tomato sauce on pasta, pizza, or tacos.

5. Drink milk with meals and drink water with snacks.

Dairy products can help kids (and adults) maintain a healthy weight, build strong bodies, and lower blood pressure. Water is always refreshing – and calorie-free.

- Serve low-fat milk with meals: The best way to get your kids to drink milk is to drink milk yourself with every meal. Aim for a total of 16 to 24 ounces per day.
- Steer clear of sugary drinks: For beautiful teeth and strong bodies, wise parents limit soft drinks, fruit punch, fruit drinks, sweet tea, and other high-sugar drinks.

6. Take the TV out of the bedroom and read together.

Pediatricians recommend no TV for children under three years, no more than two hours of total screen time a day for older kids, and no TVs in children's rooms.

- Improve your child's school performance: Children who have less time screen time (TV, computers, and video games) tend to read more and do better in their classes.
- Improve your child's sleeping habits: There are many benefits to taking the TV out of a child's bedroom: calmer bedtime routines, more bedtime stories, and better sleep.