

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Childhood obesity is considered our nation's new epidemic. With nearly a third of America's kids overweight or obese, our children are facing high cholesterol, soaring blood pressure, a fatty liver, and dangerously elevated insulin levels. We would like to help families better address weight issues and offer tips to get kids off the couch.

Fast Tips from the American Heart Association's "Alliance for a Healthier Generation"

- ✓ **Eat breakfast:** People who eat breakfast are significantly less likely to be obese and diabetic than those who usually don't.
- ✓ **Take the TV out of the Bedroom:** Research shows that kids who have TVs in their room tend to spend almost 1 ½ hours more in a typical day watching TV than their peers without a set in their room.
- ✓ **Avoid processed foods** -- Cut back on processed foods (canned foods, packaged cakes and cookies, packaged high-calorie chips and snacks, white bread, sugary breakfast cereals) as much as possible as they contain a lot of salt. Replace processed cheeses (American cheese, Velveeta) with mozzarella, cheddar, cream cheese and cottage cheese. Replace processed meats, such as salami and sausages with fresh chicken, lamb, turkey or beef.
- ✓ **Go 100% whole grain**
100% whole-grain, fiber-containing cereals served with low- or fat-free milk are a healthier alternative to sugary cereals.
- ✓ **Eat more fruits and vegetables**
Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in calories, and may be an important way to prevent and treat obesity. One study concluded that diets that are high in fiber are associated with lower body weight.
- ✓ **For family night out...**
Encourage your family to make healthier choices at the restaurant. Skip the butter or cheese sauce, choose broth-based instead of creamy soups, and avoid fried or sautéed foods. Request that vegetables be steamed, and order the side salad instead of the fries.
- ✓ **No more soda!**
What many of us do not realize is that drinking a 20 ounce soda is the same as eating 17 teaspoons of sugar. It would take nearly 4 hours and 30 minutes of biking to burn off the calories in drinking one soda a day.

W E B S I T E S

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org/parents.aspx>

The Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/childhood-obesity/DS00698>

The Go Healthy Challenge

<http://www.igohugo.org/>

Ways to get more fruits and vegetables in your diet

http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=113&iCat=22&ppp=5