



LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Childhood Obesity is usually related to increased energy, fat, sugar and portion sizes and decreased fruits and vegetables consumption, and sedentary behaviors.

Obesity increases the risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Childhood obesity can also lead to poor self-esteem and depression.

To improve your child's health, you need to work on two main areas: **change in diet and to keep your child physically active.**

Weight management is the key and a reasonable initial goal. This can be achieved through maintaining the current weight for six months or weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds per week for a goal of 5 to 10% total weight.

DIETARY (HEARTY HEART) RECOMMENDATIONS

- A key thing is to think less about food, so try to get your mind on something else.
- Finding ways to eat fresh foods is a great way to get healthy.
- Eating meals as a family always helps.
- Learn portions.
- Snacks are terrible: crackers and other snacks often pile on calories but don't fill you up, and you end up being even hungrier after eating them.
- Never skip breakfast. Protein in the morning does keep you going longer and stronger.
- Increase fluids intake to ensure adequate hydration. Drink **WATER** when thirsty.
- Choose whole-grain foods more often (whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice and low-fat popcorn).
- Encourage high dietary fiber intake from foods.
- Vary vegetable intake. Choose more dark green and orange, such as spinach, broccoli, carrots and sweet potatoes.
- Focus on fruits. Dried fruits make good snacks.
- Keep protein lean. Eat lean or low-fat meat, chicken, turkey and fish. Eat more dry beans and peas. Add chickpeas, nuts or seeds to salad; pinto beans to a burrito; or kidney beans to soup.
- Oil is a necessary part of the diet. Choose fish, nuts and liquid oils like corn, soybean, canola and olive oil.
- Avoid drinks with sugar or sweeteners as one of the first ingredients.
- Increase low-fat milk consumption to increase calcium intake.
- Limit fast food meals.
- Limit sodium intake.
- Therapeutic lifestyle changes with an emphasis on **5-2-1-0 plan**:
 - o Eat **5** servings a day of different fruits and vegetables.
 - o Spend less than **2** hours a day in front of the screen (TV, Video games and Computer). **DO NOT EAT** in front of the TV.
 - o Spend at least **1** hour a day doing physical activities.
 - o Limit sweetened drinks - soda/soft/sports drinks - (to near **zero** a day).

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase the activity you like to do.
- Increase aerobic physical activity to 30 to 45 minutes for at least 5 days a week. **Brisk "fast" walking** is highly recommended
- Enroll in special programs that help educating children and their parents on the variety of ways to live healthier and more active lifestyles.