healthy habits *for* healthy kids

A Nutrition and Activity Guide for Parents

The State of Wisconsin is proud to partner with the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin Foundation to bring you this Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids guide, the latest step in a strong and growing partnership to build a healthier Wisconsin. Working together, we are reducing the number of uninsured children, improving the health and fitness of Wisconsin citizens and educating the public about health issues.

The number of children who are overweight has more than doubled in the last decade, with the prevalence of diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, on the rise amongst our youth. Through our Healthy Kids initiatives (HealthyKids.wi.gov), we are putting nutrition and fitness at the top of the agenda.

Please use this guide as a resource to help your family enjoy healthy eating and physical activity habits, and feel free to contact my office at healthykids@wisconsin.gov or 608-266-7602 with any questions or comments.

Jim Doyle
Governor
State of Wisconsin

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Introduction

If your child is overweight, or at risk of becoming overweight, you're probably wondering, "What can I do to help?"

If you're concerned about your child's weight, the first step is to talk with your pediatrician, family doctor or registered dietitian. Work with your health care professional to determine whether your child is overweight and to decide the healthiest weight goal. In some cases, the best goal may not be to lose weight but to allow your child to grow into his or her current weight. Your health care professional will help you develop a program to help your child reach a healthy weight goal.

As part of a healthy weight program, parents can help their children reach wellness goals by making healthy changes at home. Weight can be affected by many factors, but environment is often a major component.

Healthy eating and physical activity don't become habits overnight. It takes time and effort to make them part of a daily routine. This guide tells you where to start and what you can do at home to help your child. It talks about the important role of family, realistic goals, nutrition and physical activity. The recommendations in this guide are targeted toward healthy weight for children ages 4-12.

Get your entire family involved.

Family. It's a major part of every child's life—and often the most important factor in helping a child make healthy changes. Research shows children are often more willing to eat healthy foods and be active if they see their parents and other family members doing these things first. That's why it's important to get every member of your family involved in healthy eating and physical activity.

When the whole family participates...

- Your child will not feel singled out or punished for being overweight.
- Your child will learn from example.
- Healthy eating and physical activity will be more fun.
- Everyone will benefit from healthier eating and increased activity.
- It will help to keep everyone motivated and on track.

Take the Healthy Habits Quiz to help identify areas where your family may want to make changes.

HEALTHY HABITS QUIZ:

Do you and your family...	Yes	No	Sometimes
Have regularly scheduled mealtimes at home?	____	____	____
Eat meals together at least once a day?	____	____	____
Plan snacks?	____	____	____
Tailor portion sizes to each person's needs?	____	____	____
Eat three meals every day?	____	____	____
Try to make mealtimes enjoyable?	____	____	____
Avoid making everyone eat everything on their plate?	____	____	____
Make meals last more than fifteen minutes?	____	____	____
Eat only in designated areas of the house?	____	____	____
Avoid using food to punish or reward?	____	____	____
Enjoy physical activities together once or twice a week?	____	____	____

"Yes" = 2 points
"Sometimes" = 1 point
"No" = 0 points

If your total score is:

20-22—Your family is on the right track. Use this guide for additional healthy eating and physical activity ideas.

13-19—Your family is doing well, but could work on areas where you answered "no"/"sometimes."

12 or lower—This guide should be very helpful as you try to help your child reach a healthy weight.

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Set healthy, realistic goals.

When you make changes step-by-step and set realistic goals, you are more likely to succeed in reaching them. It's best to set goals for healthy eating and physical activity that apply to the entire family.

Remember—change takes time. Even after you've incorporated more healthy foods and physical activity into your family's routine, it will take time to notice a change in your child's weight.

Here are a few goal-setting tips:

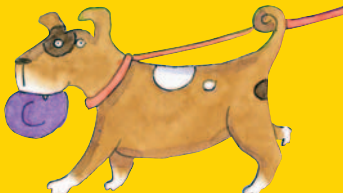
- Decide on two or three specific, small changes in eating or physical activity at a time.
- Write your family's weekly goals down and keep track of progress every day. Writing down your goals and referring back to them over and over again will help your family stay on course.
- Keeping a daily food and activity log is a good way to keep track of healthy eating and physical activity goals. Each day, try to write down everything your child eats and drinks and how much time is spent doing physical activities. If your child is old enough, he or she can keep the log on his or her own. Focus on accomplishments, not failures.

DAILY FOOD AND ACTIVITY LOG

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
–Cereal with skim milk	–Turkey and swiss cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread with mustard	–Grilled chicken breast	–5 graham crackers
–1 slice whole wheat toast with jam	–Grapes	–Broccoli	–Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
–1 banana	–Celery and carrot sticks	–Rice	–frozen yogurt
–6 oz. orange juice	–1 cup skim milk	–Apple sauce	
		–1 cup skim milk	
		–Mixed green salad w/ reduced fat dressing	

Activity: Ride bike (30 minutes), Walk dog (15 minutes)

- Don't expect perfection. If your goal is to take a family walk five days a week, and you miss a day, that's okay. What's important is that you are making a healthy change.
- When your family has turned a healthy change into a habit, it's time for a reward! Reward yourselves with a fun physical activity, such as bowling, ice skating, miniature golf or canoeing.



Make the most of family mealtime.

Eating meals together gives you a chance to help your child develop a healthy attitude toward food. It also enables you to serve as a healthy eating role model, ensure that your kids are eating nutritious foods, introduce your family to new foods, establish a regular meal schedule and keep in touch with family members.

Here are some tips on making the most of family meals:

- Prepare healthy meals that the whole family eats instead of serving special foods for an overweight child. This will create a positive and supportive environment.
- Schedule meals at regular intervals. Without a schedule, kids tend to snack more—and often reach for high-calorie foods.

- Meals tend to be healthier when planned, so try to plan menus a week at a time. Keep a log of menus you've created so you can refer to it in the future when you need ideas for a healthy meal that your family likes.
- Space snacks at least one hour before a meal. Two to three snacks per day are enough for most children. See page 9 for healthy snack ideas.
- Plan to eat at least one meal together every day. If it's difficult to get everyone together for dinner, how about breakfast? Try designating one night a week as family dinner night.
- Eat meals and snacks in the kitchen or dining room. Avoid eating in front of the computer or television.

Help your child understand when he or she is physically hungry and when he or she is satisfied:

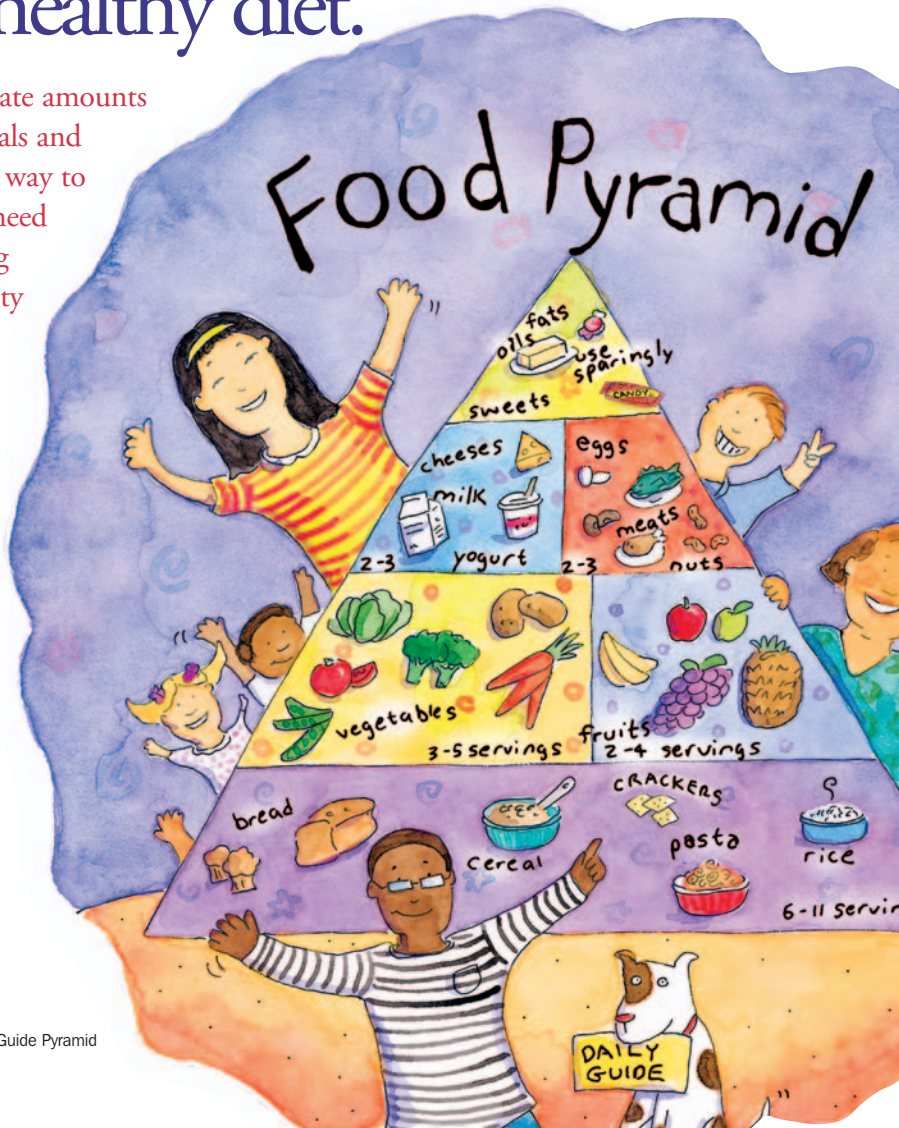
- Don't overly restrict food. This can lead to preoccupation with food or make your child feel punished or rejected. Any restrictive diet should be under the guidance of a health care professional.
- Don't use food to reward, comfort or punish your child.
- Don't make your child eat everything on his or her plate.
- Encourage your child to eat slowly. It's true for all of us: When we eat too quickly, our body thinks it needs more food to be satisfied. How can speedy eaters slow down? Here are some tips:
  - –Put the fork down between bites.
  - –Swallow one bite before taking another.
  - –If your child wants seconds, have him wait five minutes to see if he's still hungry. Make the second helping half the size of the first.
  - –Eat the meal in courses. Start with low calorie foods (fruits, vegetables, salads) and then move on to higher-calorie foods (breads, pastas, meats).

DID YOU KNOW?

It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message that your body is getting food. When your brain gets this message, you stop feeling hungry. So encourage fast eaters to slow down to give their brains a chance to get the word.

Make sure your child eats a balanced, healthy diet.

Every child needs appropriate amounts of calories, proteins, minerals and vitamins to grow. The best way to ensure kids get what they need while maintaining or losing weight is to provide a variety of nutritious foods that are low in fat and sugar. The food pyramid is a general guide for a balanced diet.



Based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid

- **Aim for five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.** You can gradually build up to this amount. A good goal to try: eat fruit with each meal for a week.
- **Reduce fat.** Opt for low-fat substitutes:
  - Low-fat dairy - skim or 1% milk (after age 2), cheese with 2 to 6 grams of fat per ounce
  - Lean meats and poultry - 95% lean ground beef or turkey; remove visible fat from meat; remove skin from poultry
  - Low-fat or fat-free salad dressings, mayonnaise and margarine
  - Desserts - angel food cake, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, animal crackers, vanilla wafers, gingersnaps, graham crackers
- **Eat sugary foods in moderation.** If your child eats a healthy diet, one sweet a day is fine.
  - Drink water, skim or 1% milk (after age 2) instead of high-calorie, sugary drinks
  - Check ingredients on nutrition labels. Foods with sugar listed as one of the first three or four ingredients may be high in sugar and should be eaten in moderation
- **Eat healthy snacks.** Keep healthy foods on-hand for snacks. Good snack ideas include:
  - Fresh fruit
  - Low-fat cheese with low-fat crackers
  - Raw vegetables with low-fat dip
  - Cereal with low-fat milk
  - Graham crackers with low-fat hot chocolate
  - Applesauce
- **Serve appropriate portions.** Oversized portions often contribute to weight gain. To get an idea of the right portions to serve your child, it might help to visualize the appropriate serving size by comparing it to objects you're familiar with:

Food	Average Serving Size	What it looks like
Meat	2-3 ounces	Deck of cards
Pasta or rice	1/2 cup	Tennis ball or ice cream scoop
Bread	1 slice	Computer disk
Peanut butter	2 tablespoons	Ping pong ball
Vegetables	1/2 cup	Light bulb
Cheese	1 ounce	Four dice

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Get active!

As with healthy eating, kids are more likely to want to be active when other family members are active too. Find ways to build physical activity—step-by-step—into your family routine. Here are some tips on getting family members together for physical activities:

- Plan regular physical activities as a family. Take an after-dinner family walk three days a week—or schedule a weekly Saturday afternoon trip to the pool.
- Limit television, video games or computer time to one to two hours a day.
- Focus on fun rather than skill. If kids think of physical activity as fun they'll be more likely to want to do it.
- Encourage your kids to play outside with other children. Be sure where they are playing is safe.

- Use fun physical activities as a reward. When your family reaches one of its goals, celebrate with a fun, active outing you can enjoy together. Go play miniature golf, practice at a batting cage, visit a water slide park, go canoeing, hiking or ice skating.
- Include activity in your daily routine. Take the stairs. Park farther away at the store and walk. Have your child participate in chores that involve physical activity such as cleaning, gardening or walking the dog.
- Expose your kids to a variety of physical activities and allow them to choose which ones they like best. Here are some activities your family may want to try:

basketball	**biking**	**bowling**
canoeing	**catch**	**dancing**
football	**freeze tag**	**frisbee**
hiking	**hopscotch**	**ice skating**
kickball	**playing outside**	**rollerblading**
running	**soccer**	**softball**
swimming	**tennis**	**volleyball**

- Keep in mind that overweight kids may feel uncomfortable in competitive sports, so activities everyone can participate in regardless of skill may be best. If your children are interested in team sports, however, you should encourage them and help them join a local team. Activities not based on skill level include:

walking	**hiking**	**playing outside**
biking	**sledding**	**swimming**
bowling	**tag**	**dancing**
ice skating	**jogging**	**flying a kite**

Additional Resources:

American Dietetic Association	www.eatright.org
American Academy of Pediatrics	www.aap.org
American Academy of Family Physicians	www.aafp.org
American Medical Association	www.ama-assn.org
Centers for Disease Control	www.cdc.gov
Department of Agriculture	
Team Nutrition	www.fns.usda.gov/tn
Food and Nutrition Information Center	www.nal.usda.gov/fnic
Weight Control Information Network	www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/win.htm
Activate	www.kidnetic.com

Notes:

American Dietetic Association

ADA views the rise in overweight and obesity, especially in children, as a serious national health issue. This alarming trend threatens health, longevity and quality of life for millions of families. ADA devotes substantial resources to the development of programs, partnerships and educational initiatives designed to help children achieve and maintain a healthy weight. ADA members translate complex nutrition principles into appealing food options for a healthy lifestyle.

Registered dietitians play an important role in helping overweight children and their families take the actions necessary to achieve and maintain healthy weight levels. This consumer guide is based on a body of scientific evidence compiled from clinical observations of health professionals in working with young people to set and meet weight management goals.

This guide serves as an important new tool to help parents and children achieve successful outcomes.

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Healthy Hints for Eating Out with Kids

Here are some tips from the American Dietetic Association to help you help your child make healthy food choices when eating out. You may want to tear out this page and use it when you're looking at restaurant menus.

Breakfast

- **Order an English muffin, toast or a bagel instead of a croissant, biscuit, muffin or other pastry.**
- **Choose Canadian bacon or ham instead of sausages.**
- **When ordering pancakes, make sure portion sizes are appropriate and skip the butter.**

Lunch or Dinner

- **Ask for low-fat salad dressings, mayonnaise, sour cream, sauces or gravy. Have these items served on the side.**
- **Avoid mayonnaise and cheese on burgers and sandwiches. Use catsup, mustard or barbecue sauce instead.**
- **Order low-fat milk, fruit juice or water instead of a soft drink or milkshake.**
- **Stick with baked, broiled or poached items. Avoid fried items such as fish and chicken patty sandwiches.**

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EATING OUT (continued)

- Ask to substitute a baked potato, raw vegetables or salad for fries.
- Watch portion sizes. If portions are too large, split one entrée between two children or ask for a take-out container and put some of the food in the container before eating.
- Ask that bread, beverages, and tortilla chips be served with the meal, not beforehand.
- Avoid items described as buttery, fried, pan-fried, crispy, creamed, in gravy, au gratin, in cheese sauce, or marinated in oil. These terms mean high-calorie, high-fat foods.
- Look beyond the children's menu. Children's menus are often limited to fried and other high-calorie, high-fat foods.

Fast Food

When eating at fast food restaurants, choose the following healthier options:

- Side salad with low-fat dressing
- Grilled chicken sandwich without mayonnaise
- Roast beef sandwich with barbecue sauce
- Submarine or deli sandwiches without dressings and cheese; ask for mustard or light mayonnaise instead, and load up on vegetables
- Chicken or steak soft tacos; skip the sour cream and guacamole
- Small hamburger with catsup, mustard, pickle, lettuce, tomato—no mayonnaise
- Broth-based soups
- Grilled veggie burger; skip the mayonnaise
- Baked potato; go light on the sour cream and margarine
- Low-fat frozen yogurt or low-fat ice cream
- Baked beans, corn on the cob, mashed potatoes

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American Dietetic Association

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Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin Foundation is working to help families achieve healthy weight levels in children as part of its Healthy Parenting initiative. The Foundation believes that knowledge gained from reviewing scientific evidence compiled by registered dietitians is of substantial value, not only to dietitians and their clients, but also to Blue Cross' associates, members, affiliated health care professionals, and the community at large.

As part of the Company's commitment to empowering families with information and resources to lead healthier lives, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin is pleased to join the American Dietetic Association in helping to create "Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids" and in making it available via the Internet at www.bluecrosswisconsin.com.

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