

What can I do as a parent or guardian to help prevent childhood overweight and obesity?

To help your child maintain a healthy weight, balance the calories your child consumes from foods and beverages with the calories your child uses through physical activity and normal growth.

Remember that the goal for overweight and obese children and teens is to reduce the rate of weight gain while allowing normal growth and development. Children and teens should NOT be placed on a weight reduction diet without the consultation of a health care provider.

Balancing Calories: Help Kids Develop Healthy Eating Habits

One part of balancing calories is to eat foods that provide adequate nutrition and an appropriate number of calories. You can help children learn to be aware of what they eat by developing healthy eating habits, looking for ways to make favorite dishes healthier, and reducing calorie-rich temptations.

There's no great secret to healthy eating. To help your children and family develop healthy eating habits:

- Provide plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain products.
- Include low-fat or non-fat milk or dairy products.
- Choose lean meats, poultry, fish, lentils, and beans for protein.
- Serve reasonably-sized portions.
- Encourage your family to drink lots of water.
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Limit consumption of sugar and saturated fat.

Remember that small changes every day can lead to a recipe for success!

Try to make 1 choice a week...a day... a meal.

1 100 calorie snack less/day adds up to 700 Calories/week and almost a pound/month.

For more information about nutrition, visit [Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.\(PDF-255K\)](#)

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/>

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

<http://www.youngwomenshealth.org>