



Children & Healthy Weight

As a parent, you may not be able to tell if your child is overweight. Children come in many sizes and shapes. Comparing them to other kids' height and weight may not tell you very much.



Who can tell me if my child is overweight?

Your **doctor** is the best person who can tell you if your child is overweight. The doctor will measure the height and weight of your child and calculate your child's body mass index (BMI). His or her doctor will then plot it on a growth chart that stays with your child's records.



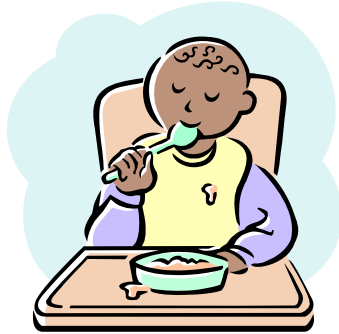
Why is it important for my child to have a healthy weight?

A child who is overweight may get teased at school, feel like they don't fit in, and not want to take part in school activities. Children who are overweight are at risk of having problems such as

- Problems moving or walking
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Liver disease



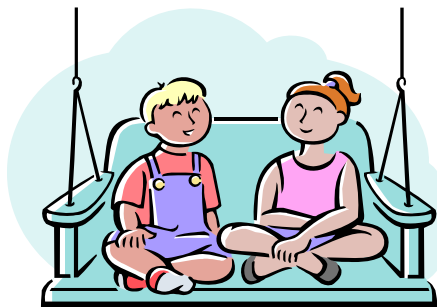
Should I put my child on a low calorie diet?



No, not unless your doctor says you need to put your child on a diet. Low calorie diets can be dangerous for young children. Instead, make sure your child eats more fruits and vegetables and less junk food.

Ask yourself some questions

- Does my child spend more than 2 hours a day sitting playing video games, using the internet, texting, or watching TV?
- Does my child snack daily on “junk” food, such as cookies, candy, sugary drinks, ice cream, and chips?
- Does my child drink soda, fruit flavored juices or sports drinks?



As a parent what can I do to help my child be healthier?

Food

- Make sure your child has 3 **healthy meals** and 2 snacks a day.
- Buy only **healthy snacks** such as fruits, vegetables, low fat string cheese and whole wheat crackers.
- Serve **smaller portions** and let your child tell you if they want more food.



Drinks



- **Serve low fat milk or tap water.** Soda and fruit flavored drinks have no nutrition and lots of calories.
- Don't buy sports drinks, sodas and juice drinks.
- Do **not** give your child more than 4 ounces of juice a day.

Screen Time

- Children should **never watch TV or play video games for more than 2 hours per day.**



Exercise



- Have your child be part of a soccer or basketball team or other active sports
 - Go to a local park and let your child play with other kids.
 - Turn on some music and dance.
 - Go for a walk.
 - Play with a ball.
 - Take your child outside everyday.
- Children need to have at least 60 minutes of active play time each

Family Recommendations

- Be a good role model. Eat healthy and exercise for you and your child.
- Decide on good health habits that will give a healthy future for your child.
- Love and accept your child no matter how much he or she weighs.



Health Education classes

- Appointments with patient educators or dietitians are available at the county hospital and health centers.
- To make an appointment with a patient educator or dietitian call 1-877-661-6230.
- You can also call the health education department for more information at 925-313-6019.



