



INTERLACHEN PEDIATRICS

Your child's BMI (Body Mass Index) is at or above the 85th percentile.

This means that he or she is at risk for medical problems associated with having an increased weight, now and in the future.

We recommend the following:

- 1) Obtain screening laboratory tests to determine if your child has diabetes, elevated cholesterol, or liver or kidney dysfunction.
- 2) Read the attached information regarding children who are at risk for being overweight. Start TODAY to institute some of the suggestions as described in our "healthy lifestyle" program.
- 3) Follow-up with your primary physician every 2-3 months to monitor your child's journey toward a healthier life.

Overweight in children is not just an issue of appearance. It is the leading health problem our children face. The most common health concerns for overweight children include:

- Psychological consequences including low self esteem, depression, anxiety and behavioral problems. These may all lead to social isolation.
- High blood pressure
- Elevated cholesterol
- Type II diabetes
- Increased risk of developing asthma
- Orthopedic problems, especially of the hips and knees
- Sleep apnea
- Increased risk of developing cancer of certain types
- Fatty liver disease

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD ATTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT/ LIFESTYLE?

The first principal to address is that an overweight child CANNOT be treated effectively in isolation of the family. In other words, your child needs everyone in your family to be “on board” with the changes in lifestyle that are necessary for them to succeed. Second, although genetics does play a small role in overweight, it is by far overshadowed by the lifestyle choices we each make for our own family. Third, early intervention IS the key to success. It is well documented that once formed, fat cells can decrease in size, but not in number. Other than the first year of life, the most fat cells form during the adolescent growth spurt.

There are three important areas toward which to focus your efforts in creating a healthy lifestyle for your child. These include:

- 1) FOOD
- 2) EXERCISE
- 3) SLEEP

The following information is provided for your education, and more importantly so you can make appropriate changes in each of these categories. Start working towards a healthier lifestyle for your child and your family TODAY.

FOOD

This is the most important area in which to concentrate your efforts. Make smart food choices, and institute proper portion control for each family member. Remember that eating is largely a learned behavior that children acquire from watching parents model eating patterns. We generally do NOT recommend that your child “diet,” regardless of his/her current weight. Instead, we prefer that the family focus shifts towards a healthier eating style. Since most meals your child eats are prepared or purchased by you, it is up to parents to provide healthy choices and direction for their children. The new food pyramid is a helpful guide. It can be accessed at www.MyPyramid.gov . In addition, a brief summary of the literature yields the following hints for healthy eating:

- ◆ Aim for 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- ◆ Reduce the fat in your diet.
 - Use low-fat dairy after 2 years of age (skim or 1% milk, cheese with 2-6 grams of fat per ounce)
 - Eat lean meats, poultry or fish
 - Use low-fat or fat-free salad dressings, mayonnaise, and margarine
 - Pick desserts lower in fat. Try: angel food cake, frozen yogurt, animal crackers, vanilla wafers, gingersnaps
- ◆ Eat sugary foods in moderation.
 - If your child is eating a healthy diet, one sweet per day is fine
 - Cut out high-calorie, sugary drinks. Drink water or skim milk instead.
 - Check the nutrition label. Limit foods that list sugar as one of the first four ingredients.
- ◆ Choose healthy snacks. Try these:
 - Fresh fruit
 - Low-fat cheese with low-fat crackers
 - Raw vegetables with low-fat dip
 - Cereal with low-fat milk
 - Graham crackers
 - Low-fat hot chocolate
 - Applesauce
 - Low-fat microwave popcorn

- ◆ Serve appropriate portions. For example:

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Meat	2-3 ounces	Deck of cards
Pasta or rice	1/2 cup	Tennis ball
Bread	1 slice	Computer disk
Peanut Butter	2 Tbsp	Ping-pong ball
Vegetables	1/2 cup	Light bulb
Cheese	1 ounce	Four dice

- ◆ Beware of fast food.

We recognize that your busy lifestyle may lead to eating out at fast food restaurants occasionally. Find out what the healthiest options are. Ask at your next visit for a handout on this topic.

- ◆ Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.

- Your child should drink plenty of water (most children do not drink enough).
- Water (or Crystal Light) should be the drink of choice outside of mealtime.
- With meals, low-fat milk or 100% fruit juice is a good choice.
- Beware the high number of empty calories in juice, soda and sports drinks.

- ◆ Teach the ROYAL NUTRITION PLAN:

BREAKFAST LIKE A KING
LUNCH LIKE A QUEEN
DINNER LIKE A PAUPER

Studies are very clear that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Children who skip breakfast perform worse on all measures of cognition and testing than those who eat a healthy breakfast. The problem is that this may also be the most rushed meal of the day, thus overlooked in terms of healthy choices. A few ideas for a healthy breakfast with a busy schedule include:

- Ham-n-cheese bagel and apple juice
- Tortilla wrap with turkey and cheese
- English muffin with peanut butter and milk
- Yogurt, granola bar and 100% juice
- Smoothie made with fruit and juice or milk
- Hardboiled egg and whole-grain crackers
- Toaster waffles with fruit and milk
- Breakfast burrito (eggs and cheese)
- Cereal, sliced banana and milk
- Microwave quesadilla with beans
- Pancakes with fruit and yogurt
- Oatmeal with fruit and nuts

◆ Teach your child to eat slowly.

It takes 20-30 minutes for our stomach to send the “I’m full” message to our brain. Therefore, if you eat too quickly, chances are you will overeat. Teach your child to set his/her spoon or fork down between every bite. This slows him/her down naturally. Sit down as a family and eat together at the table. Conversation about your day will not only slow the meal pace but improve your relationship with your child.

◆ Experts recommend these other tips as well:

- Serve food on a smaller plate if you feel your child is eating too much. It is actually true that people will eat more if given a larger plate!
- Do not eat in front of the TV. This leads to “mindless” eating.
- Never use food as a reward. Food is not equal to love!
- Try to have a family meal at least 5-7 times per week.
- For food shopping, make a list and stick to it. Impulse purchases are not usually the healthiest choices.

Part of making positive changes to your child’s diet is helping him/her learn to evaluate food choices. The “GO, SLOW, WHOA” approach (similar to a traffic light for foods) is a chart (next page) that can be used as a helpful guide for your family so that everyone can make smart food choices. Try posting it on your refrigerator at home.

GO, SLOW, WHOA Foods

	<u>GO</u> foods	<u>SLOW</u> foods	<u>WHOA</u> foods
	Eat almost anytime (nutrient dense)	Eat sometimes, at most	Eat only once in a while or on special occasions (calorie dense)
Vegetables	Almost all fresh, frozen and canned vegetables without added fat and sauces	All vegetables with added fat and sauces; over-baked french fries; avocado	Fried potatoes (french fries, hash browns), deep fried vegetables
Fruits	All fresh, frozen, canned (in juice)	100% fruit juice; fruits canned in light syrup; dried fruits	Fruits canned in heavy syrup
Breads & Cereals	Whole-grain breads, pita bread, tortillas, and pasta; brown rice; hot and cold unsweetened whole-grain breakfast cereals	White refined flour bread, rice, and pasta; French toast; taco shells; cornbread; biscuits; granola; waffles and pancakes	Croissants; muffins; doughnuts; sweet rolls; crackers made with trans fats; sweetened breakfast cereals
Milk and milk products	Fat-free or 1% reduced-fat milk; fat-free or low-fat yogurt; part skim, reduced-fat and fat-free cheese; low-fat or fat-free cottage cheese	2% low-fat milk; processed cheese spread	Whole milk; full-fat American, cheddar, Colby, Swiss, cream cheese; whole-milk yogurt
Meats poultry, fish eggs, beans, nuts	Trimmed beef and pork; extra-lean ground beef; chicken and turkey without skin; tuna canned in water; baked, broiled, steamed, grilled fish and shellfish; beans, split peas, lentils tofu; egg whites and egg substitutes	Lean ground beef, broiled hamburgers; ham, Canadian bacon; chicken and turkey with skin; low-fat hot dogs; tuna canned in oil; peanut butter; nuts; whole eggs cooked without added fat	Untrimmed beef and pork; regular ground beef; fried hamburgers; ribs; bacon; fried chicken, chicken nuggets; hot dogs, lunch meats, pepperoni sausage; fried fish and shellfish; whole eggs cooked with fat
Sweets and snacks*	Ice-milk bars; frozen fruit juice bars; low-fat frozen yogurt and ice cream fig bars, ginger snaps; baked chips; low-fat microwave popcorn; pretzels		Cookies and cakes; pies; cheesecake; ice cream; chocolate; candy; chips; buttered microwave popcorn
Fats	Vinegar; ketchup; mustard; fat-free creamy salad dressing; fat-free mayonnaise; fat-free sour cream; vegetable oil, olive oil, and oil-based salad dressing**	Low-fat creamy salad dressing; low-fat mayonnaise; low-fat sour cream	Butter, margarine; lard; salt pork; gravy; regular creamy, salad dressing; mayonnaise; tartar sauce; sour cream; cheese sauce; cream sauce; cream cheese dips
Beverages	Water, fat-free milk, or 1% reduced-fat milk; diet soda; diet iced teas and lemonade	2% low-fat milk; 100% fruit juice; sports drinks	Whole milk; regular soda; sweetened iced teas and lemonade; fruit drinks with less than 100% fruit juice

*Keep in mind, although some foods in this row are "GO" and lower in fat and calories, all sweets and snacks need to be limited so as not to exceed one's daily caloric requirements.

**Oils with no saturated or trans fats can be consumed daily, but in limited portions

EXERCISE

It is recommended that children participate in 60 minutes per day of physical exercise. For young children this can be broken-down into several 15-20 minute time periods.

Overweight children have 3 main issues when it comes to getting enough exercise:

- 1) More fat and less muscle makes exercise more difficult. They may also have joint pains due to their excess weight.
- 2) They are often made fun of by peers while exercising, and thus try to avoid this at all cost.
- 3) They tend to be isolated from their peers and consequently aren't included in active games at school.

Unfortunately, the less they participate, the less they enjoy being active. However, please remember that, as with eating, you are your child's greatest role model. If they see you being active, they too will want to join in, especially if you make it fun for them.

Limiting sedentary activities plays a big role in encouraging active ones. The current recommendation is to limit "screen time" to 1-2 hours per day. This includes television, video games, and computer activities. In our technologically advanced age, this goal will truly require you to be the "enforcer." It is best to keep the TV/ computer in a central location in the house instead of your child's room so that you can monitor this time.

Here are a few suggestions to help get your child moving:

- ◆ Offer to play games with your child when he/she is very young. Taking your child to the park is an excellent way to make exercise fun, since young children get their exercise primarily by play.
- ◆ Focus on fun rather than skill. Keep in mind overweight children may feel uncomfortable in competitive sports, so activities they can participate in regardless of skill may be best.
- ◆ Use fun physical activities as a reward when your child or your family reaches a goal. Try these: miniature golf, batting cages, water parks, ice-skating, canoeing or hiking trips.
- ◆ Include activity in your daily routine. Take the stairs. Park farther away at the store. Have your child help with age-appropriate chores like cleaning, gardening, and caring for pets.

- ◆ Expose your child to a variety of physical activities and allow them to choose which ones they like best. Here are a few ideas:

Basketball	Canoeing	Football	Hiking
Kickball	Running	Walking	Ice-skating
Swimming	Biking	“Catch”	Freeze tag
Hop Scotch	Soccer	Tennis	Playing outside
Bowling	Dancing	Jumprope	Hoola-hoop
Frisbee	Softball	Volleyball	Flying kites
Yoga	In-line skating	Golf	Gymnastics

Remember that your child is watching you. Even if all you can do is take a family walk before or after dinner, that’s a start. Begin slowly and work your way up. **MAKE TIME**, not excuses. Your child’s health depends on it!

SLEEP

Children and teens need, on average, 8-9 hours of sleep per night for optimal health.

Sleep deprivation increases the risk of obesity by increasing chemicals in your body that increase hunger and decreasing those that suppress appetite.

Caffeine is especially problematic in the late afternoon and evening. We recommend no caffeine past 3pm, as it interferes with sleep.

It is also recommended that your child not watch TV or play video games within 30 minutes of bedtime. Research shows that the stimulation caused by rapidly changing images interferes with children’s ability to fall asleep.