



NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

IN THIS TOOLKIT:

- About Childhood Obesity
- Ways to Support Healthy Growth
- Educational Materials
- Resources



CHILDHOOD OBESITY

“About 1 in 5 (19%) children in the United States has obesity” (CDC, 2020).

According to the CDC, this leads to significant chronic health problems, including:

- asthma
- sleep apnea
- bone and joint problems
- type 2 diabetes
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- depression
- heart disease
- cancer
- low self-esteem

The CDC attributes the following as factors contributing to childhood obesity:

- lack of exercise and movement
- lack of sleep
- lack of access to community sites for physical activity
- “easy access to inexpensive, high calorie foods and sugary beverages” (CDC, 2020).
- “lack of access to affordable, healthier foods” (CDC, 2020)

Childhood obesity carries over to adulthood (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).



SUPPORTING HEALTHY GROWTH

For Parents & Guardians:

- eat healthier foods and be physically active together as a family (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).
- role model eating right and being physically active for your child (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

NOTE: children should get a total of 1 HOUR of physical activity over the course of each day (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

At least 3 days a week, adolescents need vigorous activity that strengthens the bones/muscles (CDC, 2020).

- allow your child to help “pick out healthy foods, prepare meals, and set the table” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).
- if applicable, ask your child’s doctor about an appropriate weight management program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).
- limit daily screen time to 2 hours or less per day (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).
- ensure your child starts the day with a good breakfast (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).



SUPPORTING HEALTHY GROWTH

For Parents & Guardians:

- ensure your child gets adequate sleep (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

TEENS - 8 to 10 hours
SCHOOL AGE - 9 to 12 hours
PRESCHOOLERS - 10 to 13 hours
TODDLERS - 11 to 14 hours
BABIES - 12 to 16 hours

- "make sure drinking water is always available as a no-calorie alternative to sugary drinks and limit juice intake" (CDC, 2020).

For Health Care Providers:

- routinely monitor a child's weight, height, and BMI (CDC, 2020)
- "refer families to breastfeeding support services, nutrition education, or childhood healthy weight programs as needed" (CDC, 2020).
- ensure care is culturally-informed, partnering with families to help them achieve a healthy diet
- be informed about resources to give families to help them maintain a healthy lifestyle

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



Body Mass Index (BMI)

- "the most common indicator to measure the size and growth patterns of children and teens in the United States" (CDC, 2020).
- NOT to be used to diagnose, but rather screen for "potential weight and health-related issues" beginning at the age of 2 years (CDC, 2020).
- despite using the same formula, BMI interpretation varies by both age and sex (CDC, 2020).
- to calculate BMI for children and teens, visit the BMI calculator at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/bmi/calculator.html>

Teaching Kids about Healthy Eating

- learn about building a balanced plate of food and other resources at <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Physical Activities for Children and Adolescents to be done 3 times a week:

- Aerobic Activity - anything that makes the heart beat fast (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).
- Muscle Strengthening - climbing or push-ups (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).
- Bone Strengthening - jumping or running (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).



RESOURCES

CDC (2020). September is national childhood obesity month. Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/childhood-obesity/index.html>

U.S. Department of Agriculture (2020). Choose My Plate. Retrieved from <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2020). Help your child stay at a healthy weight. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/topics/health-conditions/obesity/help-your-child-stay-healthy-weight>