

A Weight Management Program for Children Ages 4-18 and Their Families



Healthy Eating Habits

Rethink Your Drink

Calories coming from beverages count too. Beverage choices can have a great impact on weight gain/loss. An average 12 oz. can of pop contains 150 calories and the 20 oz. bottle of pop contains 250 calories. Changing our beverage choices alone can help us lose weight.

Tip: Substitute calorie containing beverages (pop, juice, Gatorade, sweetened iced tea, fruit punch) with water or diet beverages.

Tip: When consuming calorie containing beverages, choose small portions (switching from 20 oz. bottle of pop to 12 oz. can will save 100 calories).

Start the Morning Right

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but often the most skipped meal of the day. Research shows that those who eat breakfast on a regular basis weigh less than those who skip breakfast. Eating breakfast gives you more energy, makes you more alert, helps with better grades/performance in school, and it helps us avoid overeating at the next meal time. Skipping breakfast is not a good way to save calories. It causes a slow down in our metabolism and causes overeating later in the day.

Tip: Make time for breakfast by having quick, easy foods to prepare.

Tip: Try mixing a high fiber cereal with a cup of low fat yogurt.

Avoid Portion Distortion

Today's portion sizes have nearly tripled from 20 years ago. Portion sizes at home, in restaurants and in stores have all increased over the years. We tend to eat more when food is presented to us in larger quantities. Having smaller portions on our plate is a great way to cut back on calories.

Tip: Never eat from bag or box; pour food on plate or in bowl.

Tip: Serve food on individual plates at meal time instead of having food on the table.

Tip: Never eat while watching TV.

Get at Least Your Five a Day

Fruit and vegetables provide many important nutrients to the body. It is important to get at least five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Research shows that people who eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day have half the risk of cancer and one-third the risk of heart disease compared to people who eat fewer fruits and vegetables.

Tip: Have a least one cup of vegetables with dinner daily.

Tip: Have a fruit at breakfast, lunch and at snack time.

Avoid Eating Out Pitfalls

Limiting the number of meals we eat out is very important. It can be very hard to eat healthy and keep calories down if we eat out often. Portion sizes are very large at restaurants, and along with larger portions comes higher calorie intake. We can take in at least a half day's calorie needs in one fast food or restaurant meal. Assess how many times you eat out and work on decreasing that number.

Tip: Order smallest sizes (small fry, regular hamburger, small drink).

Tip: Watch what you drink – choose water or diet drink.

Tip: Split order with someone or take home leftovers.

Choose Snacks Wisely

Cut back on “empty” calorie snack foods. These foods provide little nutrients and are usually higher in calories. Examples would be: chips, candy, cookies, ice cream, chocolate, tortilla chips, cup cakes, fast food. These are foods that we consider “sometimes foods,” meaning we should limit these in our diets to two to three times a week.

Tip: Keep snacks to 200 – 300 calories.

Tip: Snacks should not make you feel full, just satisfied.

Slow Down

It takes 20 minutes after we eat food for our brains to get a signal that we are getting full. Eat food slowly and take time to chew! Slowing down while we eat can help prevent overeating at that meal. Eating too fast or on the go can lead to eating higher calorie amounts.

Tip: Try the “20 Minute Rule”: Wait 20 minutes to have second servings at meal time. Usually by the time the 20 minutes are up we are not that hungry for more food.

Tip: Always eat meals and snacks at a table.

Watch What You Add

Condiments and added fats can contribute to a higher calorie intake. Butter, margarine, salad dressing, oils, sour cream, mayonnaise and cream cheese add extra calories and fat to the foods we eat. If you can, cut them out as much as possible. If you can't, use substitutes or limit the amount used.

Tip: Use low-fat versions of salad dressings, cream cheese, sour cream, butter, margarine.

Tip: Use ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce as condiments.