



...because health matters!

Nutrition Matters

September 2000

A Publication of the Peterborough County-City Health Unit

Healthy Children Come In Different Shapes and Sizes



Growing Up

School-aged children follow a pattern that includes fast and slow growth periods. Sometimes, changes in height and weight happen at different times. Children seem to be “all skin and bones” or “somewhat chubby”. This usually evens out with time.

Both girls and boys gain body fat just before the growth spurt of puberty. This is normal. On average, girls become 10 inches taller and gain 40 to 50 pounds between the ages of 10 and 14. Boys tend to grow about 12 inches in height and become 50 to 60 pounds heavier between the ages of 12 and 16. For boys, this normal weight gain is expected and socially desirable. For many girls, it's a source of worry and can lead to harmful dieting.

Dieting during childhood is **NOT** recommended. Restricting food can prevent normal growth and development. Focusing on body weight can also lead to poor self-esteem and ongoing problems with eating. Don't treat your child differently if he or she is overweight. **Love each one for his or her special qualities.**

Encourage your child to develop a variety of skills and talents.

Developing A Healthy Lifestyle

Habits start early so help your child by giving her a good role model for a healthy lifestyle. Remember, a healthy weight depends on healthy eating and activity habits.

Children need to run, jump, skip, hop and move around. Making physical activity enjoyable will increase the chance that it becomes part of their daily life.

Family Lifestyle Checkup

- 1) Do you try to have regular meals and snacks as part of your family's routine?

_____ Yes _____ No

Regular meals and snacks help children feel secure about food.

- 2) Do you encourage your child to stop eating when he or she is just full?

_____ Yes _____ No

Don't force your child to clean her plate. Trusting your child to make decisions about eating helps build self-esteem.

- 3) Do you offer high fat, high sugar foods to your child at snack time three or more times a week?

_____ Yes _____ No

Having ice cream, potato chips, regular pop, cookies, cake and granola bars available for snacks tempts both children and adults to overeat. Special days are the best time for these treats.

Family Lifestyle Checkup (cont'd)

4) Do you encourage your child to eat slowly?

_____ Yes _____ No

Make mealtimes relaxed with lots of talking and sharing. This gives your child time to enjoy his food and respond to feeling full.

5) Is your child active every day?

_____ Yes _____ No

Physical activity is important to maintaining a healthy weight. Your child needs to be active every day. Don't count on school to provide all the daily physical activity your child needs to be healthy. Doing things together such as walking, cycling, skating, and swimming helps your child develop an active and healthy lifestyle.

6) Do you limit the number of hours your child spends in front of the television?

_____ Yes _____ No

Studies show that unlimited TV and video games contribute to childhood obesity through a lack of physical activity. Limit the amount of time your child spends sitting in front of the screen. Shake up your household with a new view on how everyone spends their free time. Don't leave yourself out of the fun!

- play tag
- throw a ball
- fly a kite
- ride a bike
- dance for fun
- toboggan for thrills
- walk the dog

Healthy Eating Style

Your responsibility as a parent is only to provide and prepare healthy foods. Your child is responsible for the amount of food he actually eats. Keep in mind that a young child's stomach can't hold much food. This is why younger children need smaller servings and nutritious snacks more often. Be careful not to use food as a comfort or reward.

An easy way for everyone in your family to get the nutrients needed for good health is to include tasty foods from each of the food groups in meals and snacks.

Making Meals and Snacks Healthy



Grain Products

whole grain breads or toast, bagels, crackers, rolls, muffins, pita bread, unsweetened cereals, air popped popcorn, tortillas, rice, rice cakes

Vegetables and Fruits

raw vegetable and fruit pieces, grated vegetables and salads, vegetable juices, unsweetened canned fruit and fruit juices

Milk Products

1% or 2% milk, yogurt, cheese (less than 20% MF), yogurt or cottage cheese dips

Meat & Alternatives

hard-cooked eggs, pieces of lean meat or poultry, tuna or salmon, peanut butter, baked beans, tofu

Written by the Huron County Nutrition Committee, 1992.

Adapted and distributed by the Nutrition Promotion, Peterborough County-City Health Unit., 743-1000.

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