



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

## September is National Childhood Obesity Month

### Learn about ways to promote healthy growth in children and prevent obesity.

About 1 of every 5 (17%) children in the United States has obesity and certain groups of children are more affected than others. While there is no single or simple solution, National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month provides an opportunity for learning about ways to prevent and address this serious health concern.



### Childhood obesity is a major public health problem.

- Children who have obesity are more likely to have obesity as adults. This can lead to lifelong physical and mental health problems, including diabetes and increased risk of certain cancers.
- Children who have obesity face more bullying and stigma.
- Childhood obesity is influenced by many factors. For some children and families factors include too much time spent in sedentary activities such as television viewing; a lack of bedtime routine leading to too little sleep; a lack of community places to get adequate physical activity; easy access to inexpensive, high calorie snacks and beverages; and/or a lack of access to affordable, healthier foods.

### There are ways parents can help prevent obesity and support healthy growth in children.

- To help ensure that children have a healthy weight, energy balance is important. To achieve this balance, parents can make sure children get adequate sleep, follow recommendations on daily screen time, take part in regular physical activity, and eat the right amount of calories.
- Parents can substitute higher nutrient, lower calorie foods such as fruit and vegetables in place of foods with higher-calorie ingredients, such as added sugars and solid fats.
- Parents can serve children fruit and vegetables at meals and as snacks.
- Parents can ensure access to water as a no-calorie alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Parents can help children get the recommended amount of physical activity each day by encouraging them to participate in activities that are age-appropriate and enjoyable. There are a variety of age appropriate aerobic, muscle and bone-strengthening activities that kids can do.

### Addressing obesity can start in the home, but also requires the support of communities.

We can all encourage more children to be physically active and eat a healthy diet. For example:

- The federal government is currently helping low-income families get affordable, nutritious foods through programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP).
- State and local stakeholders including health departments, businesses, and community groups can help make it easier for families with children to find low-cost physical activity opportunities and buy healthy, affordable foods in their neighborhoods and community settings.
- Schools can help students' be healthy by putting into action policies and practices that support healthy eating, regular physical activity, and by providing opportunities for students to learn about and practice these behaviors.
- With more than 60% of US children younger than age 6 participating in some form of child care on a weekly basis, parents can engage with child care providers to support healthy habits at home and in child care settings.

Working together, states, communities, schools, child care providers, and parents can help make healthier food, beverages, and physical activity the easy choice for children and adolescents to help prevent childhood obesity.