

## Weight Management: Helpful Tips for Parents - Part I

Weight struggles continue to be a serious issue for both children and teens in the United States. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), over the past two decades the rate of obesity has doubled in children and tripled among teens. Obesity during childhood can lead to serious medical problems including diabetes, asthma, sleep apnea and high blood pressure. Additionally, being overweight can also take an emotional toll on kids, leading to depression and low self-esteem.

As a parent, you can play an important role in encouraging your child to make important changes to become healthier. Try incorporating one or two of the following strategies at a time for a gradual shift in habits, to help your child/teen attain or maintain a healthy body:

1. Remove unhealthy temptations from the home.
2. Gradually introduce healthier foods into the family diet over a period of time.
3. Consider eating breakfast daily or at minimum a late morning snack to minimize binging later.
4. Use things other than food or screen time as rewards.
5. Ensure that "special times" don't frequently involve food or sedentary activities
6. Allow your child to participate in planning and preparing the family meal - kids are often more willing to try new things if they have helped prepare them.
7. Drink a full glass of water before each meal.
8. Eat raw, crunchy vegetables and/or fruit at the start of the meal.
9. Put any snack in a small bowl and only eat at the kitchen table (eating from a multi-serving bag or while distracted often results in overeating).
10. Eat meals on a salad plate, which makes portions look larger.
11. Eat slowly, chewing food completely. It takes 15-20 minutes for the brain to register a full stomach. Eating slower typically reduces the amount needed to feel satisfied.
12. Eat out less (once a week or less) and eat meals together as much as possible.
13. Prepare easy-to-take healthy snacks ahead of time when your family is on-the-go.
14. Limit before bed and between meal snacking.
15. Turn off the TV/media during mealtimes.
16. Promote physically active family time, such as hikes, bike rides, playing outside or dancing

### Helpful Websites

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

[www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children)

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

[www.healthychildren.org/obesity](http://www.healthychildren.org/obesity)