

Dear Family:

It is great that you have decided to improve the nutrition and eating habits of your children as well as your entire family. There is so much information out there regarding being overweight, or avoiding fats and carbohydrates, or “quick fixes”.

Included in this packet is nutrition information for the overweight child. The goal for most children is to learn to eat healthy, reduce excess sugar and fat, increase exercise, and “grow” into their weight. Weight loss is only encouraged if the child is over 150% of his normal weight or with the direction of a physician.

The information in this packet includes basic information and helpful tips for parents. It also includes suggestions for grocery shopping, snack foods, fast foods, food preparation tips, exercise tips, etc. IT IS A LOT OF INFORMATION. I encourage you to go through this information and then call with questions or to set up a nutrition consultation for your family.

**Sometimes it is easier to choose just 5 areas to improve. Here are my suggestions:**

- a. **Have at least 30 minute of exercise or active play EVERY day. *One hour is better.***
- b. **Avoid soft drinks, koolaid, fruit punch, and other sugar laden drinks.** Increase water. Have appropriate amounts of skim milk (3 cups per day) and fruit juice (1/2 cup per serving). Up to two “diet drinks” a day would be appropriate.
- c. **Reduce fast food consumption or make better choices.** A good meal for an overweight child is: Small hamburger, small fry, water; or 2 regular tacos, water; or grilled chicken sandwich, water; or 6 “ subway sandwich (no mayo), baked chips, water.
- d. **Make healthier snack substitutions:** chocolate teddy grahams for Oreos, low fat granola bars for candy bars, pretzels or air popped popcorn for potato chips, etc.
- e. **Learn appropriate portions.** Most Americans eat MUCH larger portions of food than appropriate. The amount of food that can fit into the person’s cupped palm of their hand is a good serving size.

There is much enclosed information that will provide you with many ideas to put your goals into practice:

1. **Top 10 Opportunities for Change:** This gives you ideas of what the parents should control in order to help the child have more success.
2. **Changing Eating Behaviors in Children:** This gives tips for the whole family to make healthier habits.
3. **Healthy Eating and Healthy Weight for the Whole Family:** The goal is to choose some of your habits that need improvement and replace with some of these good habits. Make one new habit a month until your family does them all!

4. Sample Menus for Age Groups: This is a 2-day sample of how much food a child of various ages should eat per day. Note serving sizes. Note low fat foods. Note “treats”, such as Oreos or lemonade are in small portions.
5. Snack Ideas: Healthy snacks from the food groups. Note serving sizes.
6. Shopping List: Have these healthy foods in the house and that is what everyone will eat!
7. Trimming Fat Tips: Tips on shopping and preparing food with less fat and calories. These are the foods the whole family should eat.
8. Nutrition Tips at Fast Food Restaurants: These are some of the best options. An even better option is to go home and have a turkey sandwich, pretzels, fruit, and low fat yogurt!
9. The “Free” Extra Food List: These are very low calorie ideas of foods to offer when you know your child has eaten all he should but still asks for food.
10. 7 Day Meal Plan – Easy menus that all will love.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Feel free to call for more information or a nutrition consultation. As of January 1, 2007, a one hour consultation costs \$38.00. Unfortunately Medicaid, and many insurances, do not cover nutrition education at this time.

Good Luck!

Mary G. Miller, MS, RD, LDN, CSP