

# Feel Good About Your Body!

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**O**verweight children and teenagers should be proud of their bodies no matter what they weigh! Our wish to help them increase exercise and come to a healthy weight is only to prevent illness in the future.

*Millenials, Generation Z, and the iGeneration* will benefit from so many advances in healthcare. But we don't want them to become *Generation XXL*! Obesity numbers have tripled since the 1970s. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, sleep apnea, joint problems, liver disease are some of the obesity risks. Psychological problems are increased. Will they have a shorter lifespan than their parents?

Please do not put a child with a weight problem on a "diet". The real solution requires lifestyle changes for the whole family. Crash diets and fad diets don't work and are dangerous. Weight loss drugs are even more dangerous. We want to promote a healthy lifestyle, not an obsession with weight. Praise, love and cherish your child, and never tie acceptance to body size! Don't compare an overweight child to siblings or other children. So what can parents do?

Children learn from their parents' example. When a family sits down for a meal together (with the TV off) parents also need to have healthy eating habits. Put the fork down between bites to slow down the pace of eating!

Make sure your child's fondest childhood memories are not associated with eating and "just sitting!" Please don't use food as a reward! Give a hug instead.

Many do not exercise enough! Parents must first set a good example through their own regular exercise, and try to engage in family exercise whenever possible. Going for walks together, bicycling, or any physical activity will teach children that moving their bodies can be fun! Make daily chores a part of your exercise (park the car further away from the store and walk). Exercise is not a punishment!

Children should try multiple different activities; there is no one best exercise. Some like competitive sports, some do not. Children should find activities that they enjoy during every season. And change the routine so they don't get bored!

Eat three meals a day and scheduled snacks between meals. It's not just eating that makes us gain weight. It's what and where we eat and drink, and portion size that really counts.

Children who eat breakfast have more energy, do better in school, and eat healthier throughout the day. They also tend to keep their weight under control.

There are many resources for you on our website for specific diet recommendations: Go to our **LINKS** section, and also go to **PARENT ED** then **PREVENTIVE HEALTH**: there are 5 articles on diet/weight control. Our nutritionist, Susan Brodlie, MSRD, is available for consults!

**Eat as a family!**

**Family memories  
without food!**

**Exercise,  
exercise!  
exercise!**

**Don't skip meals  
or snacks**

**Don't forget  
breakfast**

