

ADAMS COUNTY CHILD HEALTH NOTES

Promoting early identification and partnerships between families, primary health care providers & the community.

Distributed by: Adams County Health Department/ Adams County Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)
 Contributors: Washington State Department of Health and UW – Center on Human Development & Disability

“Overweight” is defined as BMI for age >95th percentile in children over 2 years of age

OVERWEIGHT IN SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

We’ve all heard about the epidemic of “obesity” in children. Consequences of being overweight during childhood include lifelong obesity, early onset of type 2 diabetes, poor self esteem or psychological problems, orthopedic problems from wear and tear on joints, high blood pressure/high cholesterol. Children with special needs may be more likely to become overweight than other children if their disability causes them to be inactive. It may be difficult for them to move because of poor muscle tone, poor motor coordination or lack of motivation.

Healthy eating and physical activity are the keys to prevention of overweight!

HEALTHY EATING — TIPS FOR PARENTS

Practice good eating habits yourself – children learn by imitating YOU!

INSTEAD OF...	TRY TO...
Offering food at any time	Offer 3 nutritious meals and 2 healthy snacks at consistent times each day--children do well with structure/routine.
Sending your child to school without breakfast	Offer breakfast everyday—breakfast is especially important for children.
Offering cookies, cake, chips, ice cream, candy, pastries, fried food	Offer healthy snacks: fruit, whole grain breads/crackers, cereal; low-fat yogurt/pudding. After age 4: raw carrots, cheese chunks, nuts.
Giving dessert only if a child finishes dinner	Have dessert as part of the meal, but in reasonable portions
Forcing your child to finish	Offer age-appropriate portions and allow your child to decide how much he will eat of what is served.
Providing soda pop/soft drinks	Offer milk, water, 100% juice on occasion (whole milk till age 2, then low-fat or nonfat milk after age 2).
Offering food any place: at the TV or computer, in the car or bedroom	Eat together at the table-- this helps to separate eating from other activities. (Children eat more safely sitting, not walking/lying.)
Using food as a reward	Offer verbal praise or special time with you as a reward.
Using food as a comfort	Comfort with attention, listening, hugs, stuffed animals.
Using food as a distraction	Find other ways to fill children’s time.
Letting bad habits get set — eating habits are learned early!	Start young! Baby’s first meals can be at the family table. Follow your baby’s cues so that he learns to eat when hungry, stop when full.



New Food Pyramid

www.mypyramid.gov

“Make healthy-eating a family affair” (Newsweek April 25, 2005)

“Drink water and stop the pop!”

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY — TIPS FOR PARENTS

Be a role model to your children...if you are active, your child will be, too!

INSTEAD OF...	TRY TO...
Letting your child sit at the computer or TV for long periods	Limit total screen time (TV, computer, video games) to no more than 2 hours per day
Letting your child sit still for long periods	Make sure your child has the opportunity to move. She doesn’t have to become an Olympic athlete—she just needs free time to play and move. Change your child’s position every 30-60 minutes if she can’t move herself. Avoid restraining your child in seats or adaptive devices for more than 30 minutes at a time.



The Kid’s Activity Pyramid ©2001 Park Nicollet Health Source, Minneapolis, USA

**"Turn off the TV,
turn on the
muscles!"**

**Dietary Guidelines for
Americans 2005**
recommends that
children and
adolescents engage in
at least 60 minutes of
physical activity on
most, preferably all,
days of the week.

INSTEAD OF...

Being a family of "couch
potatoes"

Accepting that your child
doesn't get PE in school.

TRY TO...

Take a walk together everyday or go to the park.

Play with a ball (roll it, throw it, chase it, kick it).

Encourage creative or unstructured play at home.

Try to find simple chores that your child can do or help with.

Dance to music! If your child can't stand up, do arm motions to music.

Ask your child's teacher or therapist how to adapt an activity or play
equipment.

Look for swimming programs or community center recreation programs.

Ask that your child get physical education (PE) in school.

Include physical activity goals in your child's IEP.

SPECIAL NEEDS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

LOCAL:

(List here: local YMCA or Parks Dept programs for
children with special needs and /or local accessible parks
and gyms)

REGIONAL:

Children's Obesity Action Team (COAT) 206-987-2626
Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, Seattle <http://www.childrensobesityaction.org/>

Order a free Healthy Eating/Activity Packet 206-987-2500 or
from the Children's Resource Line 1-866-987-2500, option 4

Ski for All Foundation www.skiforall.org
(physical activities for disabled in WA, not just skiing)

Special Olympics WA (for children from age 8 with
intellectual disabilities) www.sowa.org

INTERNET:

The Kid's Activity Pyramid (tear-off sheet tablets, posters
or magnets) from Park Nicollet Health Innovations www.parknicollet.com/healthinnovations
Keyword search: pyramid

August 2003 AAP Policy Statement on Prevention of
Pediatric Overweight and Obesity <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;112/2/424>

CDC Growth Charts for calculating BMI www.cdc.gov/growthcharts

Nutrition Focus, 12, 2: Physical Activity & Exercise for
Children with Special Health Care Needs Order from:
www.chdd.washington.edu/ucedd/CO/Nutrifocus.pdf

Northwest Bulletin, Winter 2004 issue,
"Child and Adolescent Obesity" www.depts.washington.edu/nwbfch/current.html

PLEASE NOTE: There was a notice regarding the provider training on April 18th at the Othello Community Hospital sent out to all of you in the last child health note. That training has been cancelled and rescheduled to August 15th. Please call Callie Moore at 659-3317 if you have any questions.