

# Missouri Families Eating Smart and Moving More



**W**hat are the benefits for our children of eating smart and being active?

- ◆ Healthier and happier children
- ◆ Better students

But today . . .



nearly 4 out of 10 Missouri children and teens are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

Overweight children and teens are more likely to become obese adults. What are their chances?

4 out of 10	for overweight preschool children
5 out of 10	for overweight school-age children
7 out of 10	for overweight teens

The longer a child stays at an unhealthy weight, the greater the risk to develop these medical conditions as a child or a teen:

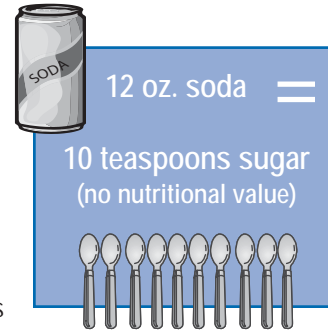
- ◆ High cholesterol
- ◆ High blood pressure
- ◆ Type 2 diabetes
- ◆ Asthma
- ◆ Sleep apnea
- ◆ Fatty liver disease
- ◆ Depression



Of concern is that overweight teens tend to develop a low self-image. This low self-image appears to continue into adulthood.

## EAT SMART

- ◆ **Be a role model for healthy eating.** Choose more fruits and vegetables. Try new fruits and vegetables and serve with low-calorie dips. Keep a bowl of fruit out for easy snacking.
- ◆ **Drink more milk and water; drink less sweet drinks.** It's okay to drink the sweetened drinks once in a while, but as a general rule, choose low-fat milk, skim milk or water at every meal. Give your children water and tell them not to wait until they are thirsty.
- ◆ **Fuel up for the day.** Start every day with breakfast. Besides cereal, fruit and milk, other quick and easy choices are trail mix, dried fruits and 100% juice boxes. Your child's school may also offer breakfast.
- ◆ **What's for lunch?** School lunches provide the nutrient needs of students and the best value. Ask your child what he or she ate. Guide your child away from fast food, a la carte foods or vending machines unless these options offer healthy sandwiches, salads or milk.
- ◆ **What's for dinner?** Setting a relaxed mealtime environment and preparing healthy foods encourages good eating habits. Ask children to help cook. Children are more likely to eat what they help prepare. Avoid forcing the child to eat everything offered.
- ◆ **Dinner out?** Busy families eat meals on the go. If you and your family eat out, limit to once or twice a week. Say "No" to Super-Size! Select regular portions instead or split the portions among family members.
- ◆ **Snack smart.** Snacks can help meet the body's nutrient needs. Limit snacking or sweetened drinks before meals.



## MOVE MORE

- ◆ **Active children make healthy children!** Children and teens need at least 60 minutes of enjoyable physical activity every day. Support your child in the physical activity of his or her choice.
- ◆ **Lead the way and be active together.** Adults need 30 minutes of physical activity on most days. Make physical activity a part of each day. Walk with your child to school, enjoy family walks in the evening or play at the park.
- ◆ **Sit less, move more.** Set a limit for your child of no more than two hours a day spent watching television or playing video or computer games. Take the television out of your child's bedroom.
- ◆ **Support community physical activity and recreation programs.** Explore local parks, recreation programs, community recreation centers and YMCAs. Find out if your school or church has "open gym" and take the family.
- ◆ **Support school physical education and activity programs.** Encourage your school to offer daily physical education classes that teach lifetime physical activity skills.
- ◆ **Give positive rewards.** Reward yourself and your child for a job well done. Think "healthy" when selecting rewards. Go on a bike ride together or enroll your child in a new art, music or physical activity class.



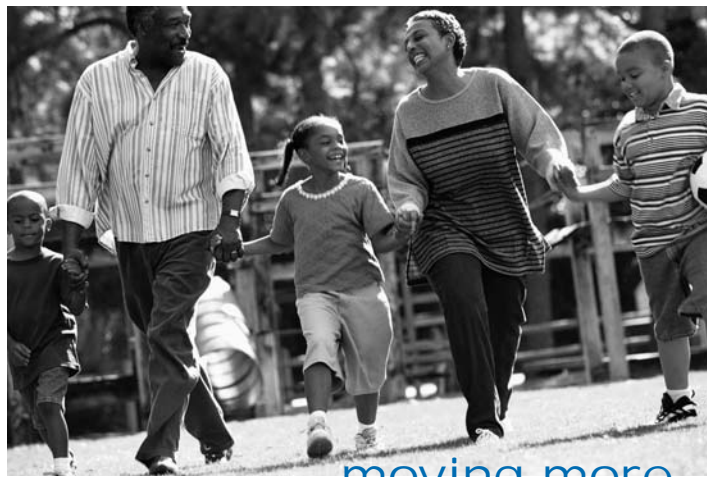
How do I know if my child is a healthy weight?



Children and teens go through several growth spurts. If you believe your child is not growing into a healthy weight, talk with your child's health care provider. A medical examination will be helpful.

If the doctor says your child is underweight or overweight, a referral to a registered dietitian will give you ideas for healthy eating. Share with the school nurse or teachers the results of the medical exam and the prescription so that the school becomes a partner in your child's best interest.

It is important to offer the child support and acceptance from the family. Make healthy eating and physical activity a fun goal for all family members.



moving more



Missouri Coordinated School Health Coalition  
www.healthykidsmo.org

A CALL TO ACTION: As a result of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, school districts that participate in the National School Lunch Act need to establish a local wellness policy committee to be in place by the beginning of the 2006-07 school year. The local wellness policy committee is to be made up of parents, students, community members, school staff and their administration. Policies and procedures are to be put in place that address nutrition education, nutrition guidelines for foods made available outside of school meals, physical activity and related topics such as fundraisers and classroom rewards. Parents or guardians are encouraged to participate or support these local efforts.



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