

# PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



Department of Health & Human Services

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## Overweight in Early Childhood (Ages 1 to 5)

### When is a child overweight?

Children are overweight when they weigh a great deal more than other kids of the same age, height, and gender. Your child's doctor or health care provider can measure your child's height and weight, telling you whether it is healthy.

### What causes a child to be overweight?

- Genetic factors – children with overweight parents or siblings are at higher risk
- Not getting enough physical activity
- Eating too much and/or drinking too many sugary drinks such as pop, fruit drinks, or juice
- Certain medical conditions and medications

### What health problems can an overweight child have?

- High cholesterol and/or high blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Bone and joint problems
- Shortness of breath and trouble breathing during sleep
- Higher risk for adult obesity
- Poor self-esteem

### How can I help my child learn healthy habits for life?

- Babies and young children know when they are hungry and when they are full. Your child will let you know when it's time to end a feeding. Avoid overfeeding.
- Don't put your child on a diet. Do offer a variety of healthy foods at meal and snack time. Let children eat until they are full.
- Make healthy eating and activity part of your family's lifestyle. Do not treat the overweight child differently than the rest of the family.
- Plan fun activities for the family to do together. This could be walking, biking, dancing to music, or playing frisbee.
- Support your child's self-esteem.
- All children should get at least an hour each day of active playtime.
- Limit the time children watch TV to no more than one hour a day. This will help them move more.
- Don't expect your child to lose weight. Slowing down weight gain is best. As your child grows taller, he or she will be at a healthier weight for height.

# What can I do to help my child have a healthy weight?

- Allow eating only at planned meal and snack times, and eat at the table.
- Turn off the TV and enjoy mealtime together.
- Limit sweets, fried foods, soda, juice and other high-sugar drinks.
- Teach your child to drink water when thirsty.

## Food Guidelines for Children 2 – 5 Years of Age

*Note: Toddlers 1 - 2 years old should be provided a healthy diet containing all food groups (dairy, fruits, vegetables, protein and bread/starches). Gradually increase food to the amounts for a 2 year old. Limit milk to 2 cups a day*

Food Groups		Servings Per Day	* Smaller portions are usually given to 2 - 3 year olds, larger amounts for 4 - 5 year olds.
<b>Bread/Cereal</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready-to-eat or cooked cereals</li> <li>• Bread</li> <li>• Noodles, rice</li> <li>• Rolls</li> <li>• Enriched crackers</li> </ul>	3 – 4 ounces  1 ounce = 1 mini bagel 1 slice bread ½ cup cooked rice 1 small (6oz) tortilla ½ cup oatmeal 1 (4 ½“) pancake
<b>Vegetable</b>	<i>Children need at least:</i>  <i>- One vitamin C food every day</i>	Vitamin A Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrots</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Winter squash</li> <li>• Sweet potatoes</li> </ul>	Vitamin C Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomatoes</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Cabbage</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b>	<i>- One vitamin A food every other day</i>	Vitamin A Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peaches</li> <li>• Apricots</li> <li>• Cantaloupe</li> <li>• Nectarines</li> </ul>	Vitamin C Foods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oranges</li> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Orange juice</li> <li>• Kiwi</li> </ul>
<b>Milk, Cheese, Yogurt</b>		<i>-When offering milk to children under 2 years of age, give whole milk only.</i>	2 – 3 Cups  1 cup = 1 cup milk or yogurt 1 ½ ounces hard cheese 1/3 cup shredded cheese; 2 cups cottage cheese 2oz American cheese
<b>Meat, Meat Substitutes</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beef, Pork</li> <li>- Chicken</li> <li>- Fish</li> <li>- Turkey</li> <li>-Eggs</li> <li>-Tofu</li> <li>-Cooked dried beans</li> <li>-Peanut butter</li> </ul>	2 – 3 ounces  1 ounce = 1oz cooked lean meat 1oz cooked fish 1 egg 12 almonds 1 Tb peanut butter ¼ cup cooked dried beans ¼ cup tofu
<b>Fats/Oils</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Margarine soft</li> <li>-Vegetable oil</li> <li>-Mayonnaise</li> <li>-Butter</li> </ul> <i>Small amounts of fats are needed by children for energy and growth.</i>	3 – 4 teaspoons

**For more information on Overweight in Early Childhood (Ages 1 to 5), call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.**

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