

# Small Steps to a Healthy Family Lifestyle

From U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

## Childhood Obesity Basics

We are bombarded every day with conflicting information about our health. Is it better to eat a low-carb diet or a balanced diet? Should we be physically active three times a week or five times a week? And how can we be expected to follow any of these recommendations when we're always so busy?

It's no wonder that many of us throw up our hands and give up. But if we want to live long and fulfilling lives, it's essential that we learn the real facts about health, nutrition, and physical activity.

Luckily, the real facts are pretty straightforward. All you really need to know about a healthy lifestyle is:

- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products -- and be sure to control portion sizes.
- Get physically active at least five times a week, for thirty minutes or more.
- Avoid tobacco and illegal drugs altogether. Sounds simple, right? Well, if it were that easy, we'd all be effortlessly fit and healthy.

Today's lifestyle doesn't allow much room for health. And that's where Small Steps comes in. We know that it's impossible for many people to make dramatic lifestyle changes. Instead, we want to help you learn ways that you can change small things about your life and see big results.

*Check out these 100 Small Steps to see what you can do to change your family's life.*

1. Walk to work.
2. Use fat free milk over whole milk. (As long as your child is at least 2 years old)
3. Do sit-ups in front of the TV.
4. Walk during lunch hour.
5. Drink water before a meal.
6. Eat leaner red meat & poultry.
7. Eat half your dessert.
8. Walk instead of driving whenever you can.
9. Take family walk after dinner.
10. Skate to work instead of driving.
11. Avoid food portions larger than your fist.
12. Mow lawn with push mower.  
(Remember that the AAP says that children younger than 12 years should not use walk-behind mowers.)
13. Increase the fiber in your diet.
14. Walk to your place of worship instead of driving.
15. Walk kids to school.
16. Get a dog and walk it.

17. Join an exercise group.
18. Drink diet soda.  
(If your kids must drink soda and are already drinking enough milk.)
19. Replace Sunday drive with Sunday walk.
20. Do yard work.
21. Eat off smaller plates.
22. Get off a stop early and walk.
23. Don't eat late at night.
24. Skip seconds.
25. Work around the house.
26. Skip buffets.
27. Grill, steam or bake instead of frying.
28. Bicycle to the store instead of driving.
29. Take dog to the park.
30. Ask your doctor about taking a multi-vitamin.
31. Go for a half-hour walk instead of watching TV.
32. Use vegetable oils over solid fats.
33. More carrots, less cake.
34. Fetch the newspaper yourself.
35. Sit up straight at work.
36. Wash the car by hand.
37. Don't skip meals.
38. Eat more celery sticks.
39. Run when running errands.
40. Pace the sidelines at kids' athletic games.
41. Take wheels off luggage.
42. Choose an activity that fits into your daily life.
43. Park further from the store and walk.
44. Ask a friend to exercise with you.
45. Make time in your day for physical activity.

46. Exercise with a video if the weather is bad.
47. Bike to the barbershop or beauty salon instead of driving.
48. Keep to a regular eating schedule.
49. If you find it difficult to be active after work, try it before work.
50. Take a walk or do desk exercises instead of a cigarette or coffee break.
51. Perform gardening or home repair activities.
52. Avoid laborsaving devices.
53. Take small trips on foot to get your body moving.
54. Play with your kids 30 minutes a day.
55. Dance to music.
56. Keep a pair of comfortable walking or running shoes in your car and office.
57. Make a Saturday morning walk a group habit.
58. Walk briskly in the mall.
59. Choose activities you enjoy & you'll be more likely to stick with them.
60. Stretch before bed to give you more energy when you wake.
61. Take the long way to the water cooler.
62. Explore new physical activities.
63. Vary your activities, for interest and to broaden the range of benefits.
64. Reward and acknowledge your efforts.
65. Choose fruit for dessert.
66. Consume alcoholic beverages in moderation, if at all. (Adults only, of course)
67. Take stairs instead of the escalator.
68. Conduct an inventory of your meal/snack and physical activity patterns.
69. Share an entree with a friend.
70. Grill fruits or vegetables.
71. Eat before grocery shopping.
72. Choose a checkout line without a candy display.
73. Make a grocery list before you shop.
74. Buy 100% fruit juices over soda and sugary drinks.  
(But stick to the AAP limit of 4-6 ounces for younger kids.)

75. Swim with your kids.
76. Flavor foods with herbs, spices, and other low fat seasonings.
77. Remove skin from poultry before cooking to lower fat content.
78. Eat before you get too hungry.
79. Don't skip breakfast.
80. Stop eating when you are full.
81. Snack on fruits and vegetables.
82. Top your favorite cereal with apples or bananas.
83. Try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta.
84. Include several servings of whole grain food daily.
85. When eating out, choose a small or medium portion.
86. If main dishes are too big, choose an appetizer or a side dish instead.
87. Ask for salad dressing "on the side."
88. Don't take seconds.
89. Try your burger with just lettuce, tomato and onion.
90. Try a green salad instead of fries.
91. Bake or broil fish.
92. Walk instead of sitting around.
93. Eat sweet foods in small amounts.
94. Take your dog on longer walks.
95. Drink lots of water.
96. Cut back on added fats or oils in cooking or spreads.
97. Walk the beach instead of sunbathing.
98. Walk to a co-worker's desk instead of emailing or calling them.
99. Carry your groceries instead of pushing a cart.
100. Use a snow shovel instead of a snow blower.