

DEAR PARENT,

Our assessment today indicates that your child is at risk for developing obesity and medical complications associated with obesity. Please initiate these 10 simple lifestyle strategies. We would like to see you back in 6-8 weeks to evaluate your success and help overcome any obstacles you may have encountered.

TOP 10 SIMPLE YET, EFFECTIVE LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Limit those trips to the fast food restaurants.

When you do go, do NOT "biggie" or "super size" the meals. Use "fast food" meals once or less per week.

Remember that all calories count!

You don't have to be a strict calorie counter but, know where the calories are coming from. Beverages are a fast way to get too many calories especially with too much fruit juice or fruit drinks, pop, and sports drinks. It takes 3500 calories to gain a pound – at 150 calories per can of pop and 120 calories per juice box, many kids can take that or more in a week's time.

Always keep food out of sight. *"Out of Sight = Out of mind"*

How many times are you tempted by those cookies left out on the counter from the holidays, or by seeing someone else eating something that looks good, even by commercials!

Reduce fats added to foods.

Limit the amount of butter or sour cream on that baked potato. Baking or broiling instead of frying can reduce the calories by 1/2! Passing on the mayo when eating out can cut the calories by 100 or more and the fat almost in 1/2 as well.

Focus on smaller portions.

If kids want seconds, go for the veggies!

Do more everyday activity.

Park farther away and walk, walk around the house while talking on the phone, walk your dog – don't let your dog walk you! Provide those opportunities for your child to move more.

Set limits on TV, computer, and video games to less than 2 hours per day.

Research has suggested that this alone can contribute to weight maintenance and/or weight loss.

Be a good role model to your children.

Eating habits are primarily a learned behavior. The likelihood of a child becoming over weight is 7% if both parents are of average weight, 40% if one parent is overweight, and 80% if both parents are overweight!

Increase the availability of "good-for-you" snacks such as fruits and vegetables.

Take the time to plan after-school snacks together. Cut out the chips, pretzels, and cookies and have peeled and sliced fruits and vegetables readily available.

Learn to listen to your body.

Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full. It takes 20 minutes to feel full, so slow down at mealtime! Remind your child to chew each mouthful 20 times before swallowing or to set their fork down every few minutes to take a "breather."

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