

Health Advice # 21 Tips to Keep Kids Fit

The busy school year brings habits that encourage kids to become overweight or obese.

Approximately **16 % of American children are obese, and 32 % are overweight,** according to research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Studies show that obesity in children and [teens](#) can be a predictor of not only a person's weight later in life, but also overall health and longevity. A recent study found that those who were **overweight or obese as teens were three to four times more likely to die of heart disease. In addition, the risk of death from colon cancer and respiratory diseases, including asthma and emphysema, was two to three times higher** in the subjects who were overweight or obese as teens.

Eat meals together. Having family meals together helps adolescents eat more fruits, vegetables, and fiber and fewer fatty foods and soft drinks.

Make favorite dishes healthier. You don't have to serve kids only salads and baked chicken. But do make their favorites, like tacos, pasta, and pizza in a healthier way.

Limit [soda](#) and juice. Both contain lots of sugar and calories. Keep filtered water in the fridge so it is available and cold when kids need a drink.

Offer treats in moderation. Ice cream, cake, candy, and cookies should be limited to special occasions. As alternatives, keep plenty of fruits like apples, bananas, grapes, and berries washed and easily accessible.

Pack a lunch. Not only will you likely save money, the meal will be healthier, too.

Exercise Tips for Losing Weight (or Staying Fit) With gym classes being cut across the nation, it's more important than ever to encourage fitness at home, go to the YMCA.

Turn off the TV. Studies have found direct correlation between the number of hours of television that children watch and their risk of obesity. **Video games and computer usage** contribute to the problem as well. **Chores count as exercise, too.** Making the bed, mowing the lawn, and raking leaves all count as exercise.

Set a good example yourself.

By [Anne L. Fritz](#) Medically reviewed by [Kevin O. Hwang, MD, MPH](#)

To your health! Anima Sana in Corpore Sano (a healthy mind in a healthy body)

Ruth Badraun, BRF Wellness, 727-687-2737

www.brwellness.com