

Some great ways to fight childhood obesity

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(HealthDay)—Childhood obesity is a problem that often follows kids into adulthood, exposing them to serious health threats later in life.

Here's how to get—or keep—your child's weight in a healthy range.

First, eating as a family is key to preventing weight gain in kids. Positive family interaction has been listed in studies published in many journals, including *Pediatrics*.

However, cancel all memberships in the Clean Plate Club. Parents who pressure their kids to finish all the food on their plate or who insist on controlling their kids' eating may contribute to their becoming overweight and keep them from learning what true hunger feels like.

Researchers at Stanford University suggest an approach called "division of responsibility" to promote healthy eating behaviors. You're responsible for making and serving food, and your kids are responsible for deciding whether to eat and how much.

Next, avoid lifestyle habits that have been shown to lead to weight [gain](#), such as drinking sugar-sweetened beverages and watching too much TV, a sedentary behavior that also encourages unhealthy snacking.

Studies also have shown that not getting enough sleep can lead to [weight gain](#). This is particularly true for youngsters.

Surprisingly, a high stress level within the family can contribute to childhood obesity, too.

Finally, when parents are overweight, the risk of their kids becoming overweight increases. So do all you can to reach a healthy weight yourself.

Here's a fighting child-obesity checklist:

- Eat as a family.

- Offer more fruits and vegetables.
- Don't insist that kids clean their plates.
- Reduce sugary drinks and increase water.
- Reduce TV time and increase activity time.
- Make sure kids get enough sleep.
- Improve [family](#) quality of life and reduce kids' exposure to stress.
- Maintain a [healthy weight](#) yourself.

If you're concerned about your child's [weight](#), talk to your pediatrician about other steps to take.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more strategies to help [children maintain a healthy weight](#).

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