

# Overweight Older Child - Prevention and Treatment

## Definition

You are concerned that:

- Your child is gaining weight too fast or
- Your child looks chubby or fat or
- Your child doesn't like sports because his weight makes it hard keep up or
- Your child is getting teased about his weight.

Now is the time to help your child. Now is the time to teach your child:

- To stop over-eating
- To eat only for hunger
- To become a healthy eater

## Health Information

### Cause

- Gaining extra weight is easy. It happens when energy in exceeds energy out. Eating more calories than you need for growth and activity causes weight gain. One pound of body fat comes from about 3500 extra calories.
- All extra calories are turned into fat. For example, eating 500 extra calories per day will put on 1 pound each week. One bagel with cream cheese has 500 calories. A 16 ounce soda has 200 calories.
- Exercise has many benefits, such as fitness and vascular health. Exercise also burns calories, but it is not the key to losing weight. For example, 1 hour of fast walking burns 200 calories. Running for 1 hour burns 400 calories. You would have to run for 9 hours to burn off 1 pound of body fat.
- It's hard to shed fat. And eating less is the key to doing it. Being more active is your backup.
- Genes do play a role in becoming overweight. If obesity runs in your family, it's even easier to gain too much weight. Healthy eating will be critical for your children.

### Eating Habits that Lead to Gaining Excess Weight

- Drink lots of soda
- Drink lots of juice or whole milk
- Take big portions of everything at mealtime
- Eat second servings of the meal
- Eat quickly without enjoying each bite
- Keep eating until you are full and "couldn't eat another bite"
- Eat second desserts
- Eat big snacks
- Eat while you watch TV
- Eat when you are at a movie theater
- Eat in the car
- Eat when you are sad or under stress
- Eat when you are bored or tired

## Care Advice

## **Tips for Losing Weight**

1. **What You Should Know About Losing Weight:**
  - Losing weight is hard. And it will become harder with each passing month.
  - However, it's possible if you start becoming a healthy eater today.
  - Here is some advice to help.
2. **Drink More Water:**
  - Drink tap water when you are thirsty.
  - Also, drink a glass of water when you feel hungry but just ate.
  - Never drink soda. Don't have any in your house.
  - Drink skim or 1% milk. Drink only 16 ounces (480 ml) per day.
  - Fruit juice: Don't drink over 8 ounces (240 ml) per day.
3. **Eat 3 Meals Per Day:**
  - Have 3 main meals per day.
  - Eat smaller portions of food.
  - Try to give up second servings. If you can't, only choose veggies for seconds.
  - Only eat at mealtime.
4. **Healthy Eating Habits:**
  - Chew your food well and enjoy each bite.
  - Eat slowly.
  - Stop eating when you are no longer hungry (usually 80% full).
  - Don't keep eating until you are "full".
5. **Limit Snacks:**
  - If needed, also have 1 or 2 planned snacks per day. Snacks can keep you from getting to mealtime overly hungry.
  - Make snacks small. Fruits or veggies with a small amount of yogurt are good choices.
6. **Avoid Unhealthy Eating Habits:**
  - Never eat while watching TV or movies
  - Never eat in the car
  - Never eat for emotional comfort
  - Never eat at bedtime

## Call Your Doctor If

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- You can't help your child eat less
- You can't help your child lose weight
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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