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# 5 STEPS

## to a Healthier Tomorrow

According to the Centers for Disease Control, childhood obesity rates are soaring. The results from the 2007-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey indicated that an estimated 17% of children ages 2-19 years are obese.

The statistics are staggering – and carry real-world, lifelong consequences. One such consequence, according to Betsy Kippers, WEAC vice president and physical education teacher from Racine, is a decreased ability to learn.

“You need a healthy body to learn most effectively,” explains Kippers. “Healthy children are more alert and ready to learn.”

The solution, according to Kippers, is not a radical diet change but rather a few simple things you can do at home to help your children.

## 1 Give options

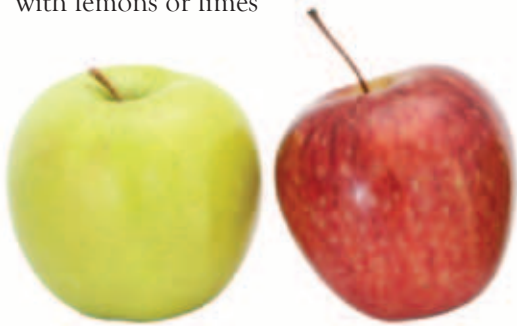
Kids want choice. You're in control of what they eat, so make sure they have healthy choices for meals and snacks. Take a fresh look in your refrigerator and cupboards to see if you have healthy options. And if you need to bring a treat to school, consider healthy alternatives.

### Instead of:

- high fat/salty snacks like chips
- diet or regular soda

### Healthier Options:

- apples, carrots or granola bars
- 100% fruit juice or water flavored with lemons or limes



### THINK SMALLER PORTIONS FOR GOOD CHILD NUTRITION:

- 1/2 of a cup of fruit, vegetables, cooked cereal, pasta or rice = a small fist
- 3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry or fish = a deck of cards
- 1 tortilla = a small (7-inch) plate
- 1/2 of a bagel = the width of a small soft drink lid
- 1 teaspoon of margarine or butter = your thumb tip
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter = a golf ball
- 1 small baked potato = a computer mouse
- 1 pancake or waffle = a music CD
- 1 medium apple or orange = a baseball
- 4 small cookies (like vanilla wafers) = four checkers
- 1 and one-half ounces of cheese = six dice

Check with your child's doctor if you have questions about proper nutrition for your child. There are also many good resources on the Internet that can offer some good ideas such as [www.bbblocks.samhsa.gov/Family/Time/kitchen](http://www.bbblocks.samhsa.gov/Family/Time/kitchen)

## 2 Lead by example

Kids are watching. If you want your child to be healthy, model the behavior you want to see. That means eating well, turning off the television and computer and being more active.

## 3 Limit screen time

Kids who spend a lot of time in front of the computer or television also snack more. Monitor the amount of time (and snacks consumed) in front of electronics. Less computer and television time provides more time to be active outdoors.



## 4 Stop the "Clean Plate Club"

If you ask your children to clean their plate before they leave the table, it may contribute to obesity. Children tend to stop eating when they're not hungry. Offer them portions that are appropriate for their ages. And don't speed-race your meals. Sit down and enjoy your meals.

## 5 Be active together

A little exercise makes a world of difference. Find daily activities you can do together. Walk the dog. Take a bike ride. When shopping, choose parking spots that are farthest from the door. Shovel or walk in the snow. There are hundreds of little activities you can do with your children that add up – and can make a big difference in making their bodies stronger.