

Preventing Diabetes IN THE **NEXT** **GENERATION**

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The U.S. received some startling news recently. The current generation is the first who may not live as long as their parents and grandparents. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, lives may be cut short by as much as five years if current obesity trends are not reversed. The rising number of overweight and obese children in the U.S. has led to an increase in the number of children at risk for diabetes when they become adults.

PREVENTING OBESITY

There is some good news, however. If we help our children to stay at a normal weight, the risk for diabetes is greatly reduced. It isn't always easy to do, though. Fast food restaurants have enticing TV ads and encourage us to super-size our orders. Fewer schools offer gym class or even recess. Our children spend more time inside than in the past, playing video games, on the computer or watching TV. But there are steps you can take to help your children and grandchildren live healthier lives.

PREVENTING DIABETES

Obesity is not the whole story. Your children are at risk for diabetes because of genetics, as well.

Developing healthy eating and exercise habits can help reduce their risks as they become adults.

MAKING CHANGES

These are not easy changes to make. Our lives and our children's lives are busier than ever. It is hard to find time for activity and to pay attention to the food you eat. One way to think about it is to incorporate a healthy lifestyle into all of the other things you do to ensure your children's future. Good health is the foundation for their success and a long and happy life.

To learn more about a healthy lifestyle plan that's making a real difference for schools and families, visit healthykidssmartkids.com.

TIPS to help your children keep their weight where it needs to be for good health and a long life.

Involve your children.

Instead of focusing on weight loss, sit down with your children and talk about getting healthier. Ask them for their ideas about what you could do as a family and what they could do for themselves. Choose one thing to try at a time. Then, talk about how it went, what worked and what did not. Make a new plan for the next week.

Offer healthy food choices.

While not all kids like vegetables, most do like fruit. Have fruit cut up and ready to eat as a snack instead of cookies or candy. This is especially helpful when kids are watching TV—a time when high-calorie snacks tend to be eaten. Try flavored water instead of soda. This does not mean that you never have sweets but that healthier foods are available, as well.

Turn off the TV. Children who spend more than three hours per day watching TV are twice as likely to be overweight than children who watch less than two hours a day. Make this a positive step. Offer activities that involve moving around as an alternative choice. Even better, go for a walk to the park or spend time with them doing something active inside, such as dancing or marching in time to music. Taking a walk with your children is a great time to talk about things that are important to them and you. They may complain at first, but they would much rather be with you than in front of the TV. And, if you have diabetes, you'll benefit as well.

Get involved. Parents can make a difference at school and in the community. For example, you can work with your children's school to offer healthy lunches and time for activity, as well as safe places to play.

