



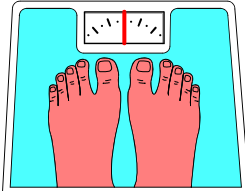
# Food For Thought

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## Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers

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Did you know that by 1999, an estimated 61% of U.S.



adults were overweight or obese, and 13% of children and adolescents were overweight? There are now nearly twice as many overweight children and almost three times as many overweight adolescents as in 1980.

There are many reasons why this has happened, but simply put, overweight occurs when more calories are coming in than are being used. Physical activity and food choices are two of the most critical factors in weight gain and loss.



Everyone would benefit from learning to make healthy food choices and to be more physically active. While no foods are “off limits,” a sensible, healthy eating plan highlights foods that have moderate amounts of fat, sugar, and sodium. Include a variety of foods, especially whole grains, fresh vegetables and fruits. Be careful to limit portion sizes of foods high in

calories, such as cookies, cakes and other sweets, and fats, oils and spreads.

### More healthy habits:

- Don't draw attention to healthy foods you've purchased.
- Eat meals together so you can be a role model.
- Make meals a pleasant time to discuss your day, not a time for lecturing or punishing.
- Don't eat in front of the television.
- Stock your kitchen with healthy lunch and snack foods and store cookies out of sight.
- Rethink the way you eat and shop. Have vegetables, beans or pasta as the focus of your meal, with meat as a side dish.
- Serve healthy snacks and have smaller meals.
- Involve kids in planning, shopping and preparing meals, snacks, and school lunches. Research shows that kids usually eat the dishes they fix.
- Don't use food as punishment or reward.

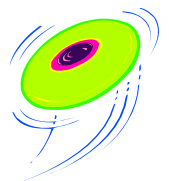


- Help your child consider healthy choices in places he eats, such as the school cafeteria or fast food restaurants.
- Choose smaller sizes, share side orders, set aside half of a restaurant dinner for lunch the next day.

### Be Active

Experts recommend that most children get at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily. Physical activity is a great opportunity to spend undistracted, quality time with your kids. All family members should help select family activities. Here are some ways parents can help:

- Buy birthday and holiday presents that promote movement, such as roller blades, Frisbees, a croquet set, or a softball and glove.
- Involve your extended family and friends in your activities.
- Emphasize fun, not skill.
- Volunteer for physical activity events at your child's school.
- Find activities in your community, such as hiking trails, swimming pools, and skating rinks.



- Plan parties and vacations around movement and play. Instead of a birthday outing at the movies, how about miniature golf or roller-skating? Or a vacation that includes swimming, camping, canoeing, hiking, etc.?

Your family does not have to launch into a vigorous exercise regime to expend more energy. Try making changes in your everyday routine: walk instead of drive, park further from the store, take the stairs instead of the elevator.

A few changes in what you eat and how you play can make big changes in your health.

### Did You Know ? ? ? ?

- Nearly 60 percent of 3- to 5-year-old children eat more than three times a day. Snacks can be a very positive part of children's diets.
- Many preschool children dislike milk altogether, and consume less than 1 cup a day. Cheese, yogurt and other dairy foods are extra important for those children.
- Preschool children often prefer cereals, breads and crackers to meat and other chewy, protein-rich foods.
- Children accept crispy raw vegetables more readily than they do cooked ones.

- Eating a limited variety of foods is the feeding problem that most often bothers mothers of preschoolers.
- The major contributor of iron in preschoolers' diets is cereal grains.

### Veggie Dip

- 1 cup low-fat sour cream
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt, plain or vanilla
- 1 1-oz. pkg. dry ranch salad dressing mix.

Combine ingredients. Refrigerate for 1/2 hour. Serve with assorted vegetables such as:

Broccoli



Cauliflower



Carrots

Celery



Green Pepper

Mushrooms

Cucumber slices



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### Add Activity to Your Life

Physical Activity is one of the keys to good health for people of all ages.

*Did you know...*

Children who are active beginning in their early years are less likely to develop childhood obesity, a growing problem among children.

Help your children develop good physical activity habits by exercising with them regularly. Set a time each day to do activities. Do different activities every day. Examples:

- Take a walk, walk a block, run a block, skip a block.
- Jump rope.
- Do jumping jacks, jump out, raising arms straight up and spreading legs to land. Jump back, pulling feet together and arms back to sides.



Start with 5 or 10 minutes a day and gradually increase the amount of time to a total of thirty minutes a day. Let the kids decide what activity to do and be the leader.