



**YOU,
first!**

Because good health starts with you.

Just the Facts

Protect your child from obesity

Here are four proven strategies that may help. Try them yourself. They may help *you* lose a few pounds as well.

Keep track.

Buy your child a pedometer — better still, get one for everyone in the family! These inexpensive devices clip easily onto clothing, and measure how many steps you take during the day. This way you can have fun every evening seeing who covered the most distance. Kids tend to love these challenges, and will naturally want to do more. Just keep it light-hearted, and help your child “win” on occasion.

Make sleep a priority.

Research shows that chronic lack of sleep in children may actually change their hormone balance and slow their metabolism. This can then lead to an increased obesity risk. That’s one reason it’s important to establish a regular bedtime routine. To help your child get sleepy when it’s time for bed, keep distractions to a minimum in his or her bedroom. This may include removing TVs, cellphones, and computers.

Choose the menu.

Given the option to plan a meal, kids tend to include hot dogs, potato chips, and the like. So it’s better for you to keep control of the menu. Try to stick with your healthy food plan, even if your child leaves uneaten vegetables on the plate. Studies show that the more kids are exposed to a food, the more likely they are to try it.

Eat dinner as a family.

Studies show that kids who regularly eat meals with their families tend to have healthier diets and lower obesity rates. Whereas when kids eat on their own, they are more likely to eat unhealthy food and pay less attention to their hunger levels. This can lead to mindless overeating.

With these simple lifestyle habits in place, your child will have a better chance of maintaining a healthy weight all the way into adulthood.