



## Overweight/Obesity

At Roseland Pediatrics we are committed to providing the highest quality and the most up to date health care for your child. We are here to partner with you to create a mutually agreed upon strategy which will require ongoing medical monitoring to help your child reach a healthy weight for their age & height. Children who are overweight/obese make up a growing percentage of our practice, and we know that children with obesity commonly become adolescents and adults with obesity. Obesity puts children and adolescents at risk for both serious short and long-term adverse health outcomes. Children can suffer today from poor psychological and emotional health from weight stigma and teasing/bullying, increased stress, depression and low self-esteem. These factors can start a vicious cycle leading to more binge eating, isolation and less exercise. In the future your child could develop cardiovascular disease including high blood pressure, abnormal lipid profiles, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea and fatty liver disease. If it is determined at your child's well care visit that they are overweight (BMI > 85%) or obese (BMI > 95%), here are practical steps that you can take as a family to help your child move to a healthier weight for their health:

1. It is always best to model healthy habits for your child so that they learn these behaviors to be "normal." The type and quantity of food that you eat, as well as the beverages you drink will greatly influence your child's future appetite behaviors and food preferences.
2. Be thoughtful of what your child is both eating at home, and also outside the home. Food consumed during school hours, day after day, week after week, can contribute to excessive calories. Try to limit the regular consumption of fried foods, sugar sweetened beverages and the use of vending machines. Leftover home-cooked dinners make for healthy school lunch the following day.
3. Fast foods contain high levels of saturated fat, simple carbohydrates, sugar and sodium. They are convenient, taste great and have good marketing strategies. Avoid when possible.
4. Parent feeding styles can influence your child's risk of obesity. Parents who respond to their child's cues of hunger and satiety are helping their children eat intuitively. Family meal-time routines are very important and are an opportunity to model good meal-time habits where families focus on their food and conversation, while limiting multi-tasking including electronics use. Try not to encourage your child to "finish their plate" but instead complement them for trying new foods.
5. Limit snacking on processed foods. If children are hungry between meals, they can eat real food. If children are reluctant to eat the meals that you provide, offer leftovers as snacks.
6. Teach your child to slow down when eating. Fast eating habits can lead to overeating.
7. Build exercise into your daily routine. Young children can get exercise through non-competitive, fun activities, enjoyed by your whole family. Try to move vigorously 60 minutes/day. Likewise limit sedentary behavior to 1 hr/day. If your child is very overweight, non-weight bearing exercise such as swimming and bicycle riding is a good place to start.
8. The American Heart Association suggests just one sugar-sweetened beverage (juice or soda)/week!
9. Make sure to eat breakfast every day! Skipping breakfast can lead to overeating during the day.
10. Ask your child what would motivate them to lose weight? Young children may need to look inwards for motivation. As your child's doctor, we would like your child to move to a healthier weight to be healthier, however, if your family is going to make changes, it is important to explore what motivates your child.

## Helpful resources

Here are some resources to help your child get to the appropriate weight for their health:

- 1) *Nutrition Hive*: Virtual nutritionists at [nutritionhive.health](http://nutritionhive.health)
- 2) Kid-fit: A multi-disciplinary team of Endocrinologists, Nutritionists, Trainers and Social Workers through Goryeb Hospital for children ages 3-18 whose BMI > 85<sup>th</sup> percentile or for children experiencing rapid weight gain. 973-971-8824
- 3) Learn to eat healthy at [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov), a website with helpful nutritional information sponsored by the USDA.
- 4) Dr. Joanna Dolgoff's Red Light, Green Light, Eat Right **teaches kids how to make healthy choices based on the principles of the traffic light**: green light foods are nutritious, yellow light foods are eaten in moderation, and red light foods are occasional treats.