

LIFESTYLE CHANGES AND OBESITY THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITIES

Obesity is a family matter and has to be dealt with in united and consistent fashion. No child, adolescent or adult can experience success in dealing with this lifestyle issue unless there is commitment from all family members, especially parents, to follow through on the basic rules below.

1. **No high calorie snacks between meals.** This means no pop, fruit juice, cookies, chips, nuts, bread, candy or chocolate. A fresh fruit snack is fine. Don't buy pop, chips or other high calorie snacks with regular grocery purchases – they can be bought for special occasions (i.e. guests) whenever they are really required.
2. **No pop or juice in the house.** Diet cola is allowed but why waste the money?
3. **No eating in front of the TV set – ever.** All meals must be eaten at the table – either in the kitchen or dining room.
4. **Mealtimes, dinner especially, should be regular. Try to eat dinner late – no earlier than 6.30pm if possible.**
5. **As many family members as possible to sit down to a meal.** A home is not a restaurant and meals should always be eaten together as a family. There may be occasional exceptions to this rule for work and other unavoidable conflicts.
6. **Rules for fast food restaurants (MacDonalds, Burger King, KFC etc.):**
 - No “combo” meals - ever**
 - No cheese burgers - ever**
 - No “biggie sizing” – ever**
 - Small fries allowed**
 - Eat sitting down – no eating in the car**
 - ONLY ONE VISIT TO A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT PER WEEK.**
7. **Don't eat just because you are hungry.** Wait until the next meal – suck it up!
8. **Take time over your meals and chat with family.** A meal should last at least 20-30 minutes and should be a time for the family to talk about the events of the day.
9. **Eat slowly and enjoy your meal.** The food is not going anywhere.
10. **Don't finish everything on your plate just because it is there!** Stop if you are full. The food can be put in the fridge for another time.
11. **Stop eating if you feel reasonably full.** You do not have to feel “stuffed” at the end of every meal.
12. **No more than two hours of TV, video games, computer (apart from homework) per day.** Go for a walk, read a book or play with the dog instead.
13. **How much you or anyone eats at a meal is private and not for discussion.** There are to be no comments
14. **Try to find a regular physical activity that you enjoy.** Try to have family members do this together. If a parent can't find the time or energy to make the commitment to an activity then it is unreasonable to expect a child or adolescent to.