

# Obesity in Children

By the Heart & Stroke Foundation

Overweight children do not always become overweight adults, but children who are obese over a long period of time and those who become obese in later childhood and adolescence are more likely to constantly struggle to control their weight and to grow up to be obese adults.

Research indicates that more Canadian children are overweight and obese than in the past. In 1981, about 14% of girls and 18% of boys were obese. By 1991, 24% of girls and 26% of boys were considered overweight or obese.

The weight gain in children is due primarily to lack of physical activity, rather than poor eating habits. To reverse that trend, children should become more active and eat properly. Active, healthy children have a better chance of becoming active, healthy adults.

Helping children

- Encourage your children to get moving.
- Limit the amount of television they can watch and the time they can spend playing video and computer games.
- Organize family outings, such as hiking, biking, swimming and skiing.
- Encourage your children to participate in any sports they enjoy.
- Encourage your children to develop healthy eating habits and enjoy healthy foods.
- Teach them about Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating,

and tell them how important balance, moderation and variety are in their diet.

- Explain how having smaller meals and snacks more often is a healthier way to eat.
- Set a good example yourself - be active and develop healthy eating habits.

In your concern about your child's weight, don't take the fun out of food. Don't talk about physical activity only as a way to lose weight. To make physical activity and healthy eating a natural part of their lives, children should enjoy them and get pleasure out of being active and eating well.

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For more information, please visit [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca), or contact your local Barrie area Heart and Stroke office at (705) 737-1020.



## FIVE Suggestions FOR A Healthier You

Nancy Cook  
Fitness Professional / Owner  
Go Figure!

Have you ever thought of booking an appointment with yourself? How many times have you found yourself saying: if only I had more time? Time is relevant. There will never be more than 24 hours in a day. What we choose to do with our time is what makes the difference. Our lives have become too busy. I found myself saying to my husband "Let me pencil you in..." Literally; I must pencil the time into my agenda to ensure I make the time. Many of us are balancing work, family and other obligations; finding the time becomes a barrier to physical activity and, essentially, our well being.

- Book an appointment with yourself  
If finding time to exercise, eat

a balanced diet, and de-stress is difficult, book an appointment with yourself. Many of us work 40 hours a week or more, not to mention the hours spent running errands after work, but we can scarcely set aside one hour a day for ourselves. We need to schedule the time to stay in good health.

- Choose realistic Goals

The key to a successful health plan is to choose realistic goals. An overly-ambitious plan will usually fail. To achieve a long-

aiming for at least 8 hours of sleep. If you have difficulty sleeping, get outdoors for some fresh air and exercise before turning in.

- Write in a Journal

Take the time to keep a journal, and jot down what you eat, what exercise you take, etc. This enables you to see your progress, or areas of difficulty. You might not realize how many times you have reached for unhealthy snacks, or how many extra calories you



term result, set small, attainable goals so that, at each stage, you can succeed and feel good about yourself. There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

- Get a good night's sleep

Pick a regular time to go to bed and stick with the routine,

consumed in those coffees? You will realize it when you see it on paper.

- Use a personal trainer.

If you are unsure of how to create an exercise routine, or a plan to improve your health, talk to an expert. Exercise is not

# Nutrition, Lifestyle & Health

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Everyday brings us more information about the connection between diet, lifestyle and illness, and shows that, when we don't take proper care of ourselves, and are deficient in nutrients, many disorders are likely to develop. I believe that once we realize this connection, and truly understand that everything we eat and do affects how our body functions, we are well on our way to good health. If I had known this in my twenties, I could have avoided a lot of pain and suffering. Unfortunately, most of us take our health for granted until it is gone. That's exactly what happened to me. I had to become quite ill before I realized the need to make some changes.

Thankfully, more and more people are becoming aware of the importance of good nutrition and proper lifestyle. They want to improve their health and maintain a proper weight through better eating habits. But many make changes too rapidly. This is usually a recipe for failure, since too many sudden changes are stressful, and difficult to stick with long term. Gradual, positive changes in our diet and routine can reduce the feeling of being deprived, and make the transition much easier. However, if you are the type who is better at making changes all at once, that's great. The sooner you are living a healthier lifestyle, the sooner you will notice results.

To achieve and maintain wellness, your body must get all the nutrition and purified water it needs. Equally important are exercise, proper rest, fresh air, sunshine, minimal stress and a positive attitude. I don't think it can be emphasized enough that how we treat our bodies today will determine how we will feel

in the future. When you give your body what it needs, it will heal, strengthen, and achieve wellness.

I believe taking responsibility for your own health is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your family. Not only will you feel healthier, younger, and have great energy, but also, you will look better too. When you take care of yourself, you usually shed unwanted pounds, and your skin tends to improve. If you are in good health now, by improving your diet and lifestyle, you should maintain wellness, and will probably feel even better. By making positive changes today, you can help prevent a serious illness later in life, when a cure would be much harder. Prevention is really the key to good health. Although it is better to take proper care of yourself from a younger age, it is never too late to improve your health. People in their seventies and eighties have overcome different illnesses through improved diet, supplements, juicing, pure water, detoxification and exercise.

I am writing this column to help people understand the connection between nutrition, lifestyle and health, and hopefully many of you will reap life-long benefits from it. Initially, it does take some time and commitment to give your body everything it needs, but for me it was well worth the journey. I hope it will be for you too.

an option: it is a requirement for good health. A personal trainer can help you set realistic goals and provide motivation. Make sure that you check the credentials of the professional you choose. Check for level of education, type of certification and up-to-date insurance. There are various levels of education, ranging from a weekend course to a university degree. Look for someone with whom you feel comfortable to share personal information.

Proper exercise is an optimal choice for improving and maintaining your good health; the benefits are endless.

These suggestions should help you get on the right track for a healthier you. Focus on feeling good about yourself; take time to stay in good health. When we focus on becoming healthy, the rest just happens.

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