

# Pediatric Diet & Fitness Center

Proper nutrition and regular exercise are important at any age, but even more critical in children. Major issues range from childhood obesity to hunger and malnutrition. While items high in refined sugar are not recommended, some artificial sweeteners may be inappropriate for children. Complex carbohydrates and healthy fats and oils also affect in childhood development.

## Exercise & Children

-Infancy and early childhood and exercise

Between birth and age 2, children get all the exercise they need from daily life. Although there are no generally recognized fitness requirements for this age, it is typically recommended that physical activity that aids in motor development be encouraged.

Regular fitness begins with toddlers, who are naturally active. Toddlers are developing the basic movement skills (e.g., walking, running, kicking, throwing). By the age of 2 years, most children can walk, run, and jump in place with both feet. By 3 years, most can run and jump well and can often balance on one foot for a short time, climb, pedal a tricycle, kick a ball forward and throw a ball overhand.

It is typically recommended that toddlers spend a minimum of 30 minutes every day in structured physical activity (adult-led), as well as a minimum of 60 minutes every day in unstructured physical activity (free play). It is also recommended that time watching the television or videos and time spent in a high-chair or car seat be limited in young children.

Age-appropriate active toys (e.g., balls, push-and-pull toys, riding vehicles) can provide a great deal of exercise for toddlers. Activities, including exploring a backyard or playground, imitating animal movements, simple dances, and children's games are also good forms of exercise for toddlers.

## Middle childhood and exercise

Children between the ages of 5 and 10 years still have a natural tendency to be active. They have generally mastered the basic movement skills and are improving their coordination. They are typically learning new, more complex tasks (e.g., hopping, skipping, swimming). Older children continue to improve these skills.

It is generally recommended that preschoolers and school-age children get a minimum of 60 minutes of adult-led (structured) physical activity daily. Younger children can also include 60 minutes of free play (unstructured physical activity) each day. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that sedentary activities (e.g., the computer, television, video games) be limited.

Preschoolers and older children often enjoy exploring a backyard or playground, kicking a ball back and forth, treasure hunts, riding bicycles and simple obstacle courses. Swimming, hiking, dancing, children's games and household chores are also good sources of exercise. Access to plenty of games and sports equipment, such as balls and jump ropes, encourages activity in children. This may also be a good time to investigate local children's sports leagues or other activities.

### **Adolescence and exercise**

Participation in physical activity may decrease during adolescence as more factors (e.g., increased emphasis on academics, preparation for college, jobs) tend to consume time in a teenager's day.

It is typically recommended that adolescents spend at least 60 minutes of every day performing moderate to vigorous physical activity. However, if the adolescent is overweight or very sedentary, it may take time to work up to this goal. Limiting sedentary activities (television, videos, computer) during adolescence is also recommended. Overweight adolescents are at risk for becoming overweight adults, with all the potential health problems (e.g., high cholesterol, diabetes) common among overweight adults.

There are numerous activities adolescents can participate in to remain physically fit. Sports and other athletic activities (e.g., dancing, skateboarding, rollerblading, swimming, surfing) are popular during adolescence. Adolescents may also enjoy strength training, going to a gym or exercising with home exercise videos. Active jobs, such as babysitting and working as junior camp counselors or assistant coaches can also be beneficial.

## **Nutrition & Children**

Getting the right balance of nutrients is challenging because children's nutritional needs will change as they grow – along with their food preferences, eating habits and activity levels. A child's nutritional needs will vary based on age, size and metabolism, existing health conditions and other factors.

Newborn infants receive all of their nutritional requirements either through breastfeeding or formula. The age at which a child is ready for "solid" food varies. Good nutrition for children over age 2 is essentially the same as for adults, with the exception of the amount of calories required. Like adults, children need the right assortment of nutrients, vitamins (e.g., vitamin C) and minerals (e.g., calcium, iron) to grow, develop and function. Nutrients include the following:

- **Carbohydrates.** The primary source of calories for the human body. Nutritional experts generally recommend that between 50 and 60 percent of an individual's total daily calories come from carbohydrates, primarily complex carbohydrates.
- **Protein.** Found in meat, poultry, fish, beans, nuts, eggs and dairy products. Protein is crucial to building and repairing most body tissues (e.g., muscles, skin, organs) as well as the immune system. It is generally recommended that about 10 to 20 percent of an individual's daily calories come from protein.
- **Fats.** Also called lipids, the proper amount of fat is vital to good health. Fat is part of all cell membranes and makes up the sheathing around nerves, which is important to efficient nerve conduction. It is recommended that no more than 35 percent of the daily calories in the diet of a child over age 2, adolescent or adult come from fat.
- **Fiber.** A filling nutrient that helps move food through the digestive tract and prevents constipation. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are good sources of fiber.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that parents and other caregivers use the MyPyramid's nutritional guidelines as a reference to ensure that children are getting all the nutrients, vitamins and minerals they need. MyPyramid was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a dietary guideline for children, adolescents and adults. It is composed of six different-colored steps, each representing a specific food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, protein sources (e.g., meat, fish, beans, nuts), and fats and oils. MyPyramid also encourages regular physical activity as an essential part of any healthy dietary regimen.

A combination of good nutrition and exercise helps keep the body healthy and fit. Poor nutrition and lack of exercise can lead to numerous health problems, including obesity, malnutrition, and iron deficiency anemia.

## **The 10 Commandments of Healthy Eating for Parents**

*It's As Simple as Counting to Ten*

**-- By Becky Hand, Licensed & Registered Dietitian**

1. Thou shalt not force, bribe or coerce thy child to eat.
2. Thou shalt set a good example by eating at least five fruits and vegetables, three whole grain products, and three dairy servings per day thyself.
3. Thou shalt make mealtimes pleasant.
4. Thou shalt encourage thy child to help in meal planning, preparation, and cleanup.
5. Thou shalt back off when mealtime becomes a power struggle.
6. Thou shalt accept food "binges" as phases that will eventually pass.
7. Thou shalt accept the fact that thy child is an individual and thus will dislike certain foods (and there may be many!).
8. Thou shalt not give up on introducing thy child to new foods. Thou shalt realize it sometimes takes ten tries to get a child to accept a food.
9. Thou shalt use this division of responsibility for eating: As the parent, thou art responsible for deciding when and what to serve. Thy child is responsible for deciding how much (if any) will be eaten.
10. Thou shalt give thy child a multivitamin-mineral supplement if he is a picky eater.

## Mind Over Body

### 10 Step to Achieve a Healthy Lifestyle

By Dean Anderson

- 1 Put "I" into Your Vocabulary
- 2 Take the Stress Out of Weighing In
- 3 Move Beyond Toxic Guilt
- 4 Taming the Emotional Eating Beast
- 5 Take the Mystery Out of your Motivation Problems
- 6 Write Your Vision Statement
- 7 Plot Your Strategy
- 8 Give Yourself a Reality Check-Up
- 9 Pave the Way for Persistence
- 10 Learn From Your Own Experience

## Obesity and Dementia

A big belly now could spell trouble for your brain later

### Health News

Want another reason to lose that gut? Researchers in California believe that excess abdominal fat in middle-aged individuals may raise the risk of dementia later in life.

According to the 27-year study conducted by the Kaiser Permanente Division of Research in Oakland, California, individuals who were obese (body mass index 30 or above) in their 30s and 40s were 74 percent more likely to have dementia in old age. But obese individuals aren't the only ones at risk. In fact, overweight people (body mass index 25-29.9) were 35 percent more likely to experience reduced brain function, compared to individuals who maintained a healthy weight (body mass index 18.6-24.9).

In addition to age and high body mass index, researchers determined that skin-fold thickness in the upper back and upper arms is also strongly associated with dementia. In fact, both men and women with the highest skin-fold measurements had a 60-70 percent greater risk of dementia compared to those with the lowest measurements.

# Surprise Muscle Foods

Add variety to your grill with these high-protein substitutes for chicken and beef  
by Kimberly Flynn

## 1. CLAMS

**Why they're good for you:** Clams are loaded with iron and are one of the few meats high in vitamin C — one serving contains nearly half of your recommended daily intake.

**Prep:** None needed. Just toss the shells on the grill.

**How to cook 'em:** Grill over high heat until they pop open.

## 2. LOBSTER

**Why it's good for you:** In or out of the shell, lobster meat is significantly lower in fat than pork and beef, with a healthy dose of calcium.

**Prep:** While the lobster is still alive, cut it in half lengthwise, drain and reserve the juices, and brush with olive oil or butter.

**How to cook it:** Place the cut side down on a very hot grill for 3 minutes, then flip and pour the juice over the top; grill for another 4-5 minutes. The heat caramelizes the meat, giving it more flavor.

## 3. VENISON

**Why it's good for you:** Deer meat has fewer calories than chicken breast and twice as much iron as beef.

**Prep:** Marinate in red wine or olive oil before grilling.

**How to cook it:** Lean meats are best cooked to medium rare, so 3 to 4 minutes per side over high heat.

## 4. OSTRICH

**Why it's good for you:** This long-necked beast is very lean and contains a large amount of iron.

**Prep:** Drizzle with or marinate in olive oil. Since the meat is lean like venison, it needs added fat to stay moist.

**How to cook it:** Grill over high heat, allowing the meat to cook for 3 to 4 minutes per side.

## 5. SWORDFISH

**Why it's good for you:** Besides being the ultimate sailing trophy, swordfish has virtually the same number of calories per serving as chicken or beef, and it's loaded with heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

**Prep:** Brush with olive oil and top with a squirt of fresh lemon juice.

**How to cook it:** Just like ostrich. Grill over high heat for 3 to 4 minutes per side.

