

An active and healthy lifestyle

guidance booklet
for families



WHAT'S INSIDE

**Making
changes**

**Healthy
eating**

**Physical
activity**

**Lifestyle and
wellbeing**

What is this book about?

CONTENTS

1. Where to begin

Your current lifestyle and making changes

2. Healthy eating

Eating a balanced diet, managing portion sizes and making healthy food choices

3. Physical activity

Being physically active - benefits and ideas

4. Lifestyle and wellbeing

Frequently asked questions about children and weight, bullying and sleep

With the many pressures on today's parents, leading a healthy lifestyle can be easier said than done. This book will help you think about your family's current lifestyle and offer advice on eating a healthy balanced diet, being physically active and feeling good about yourselves.





Where to begin?



Think about where you are now, and build on that



Go for gradual, realistic changes and don't try to do everything at once



Set yourself goals



Be a positive role model



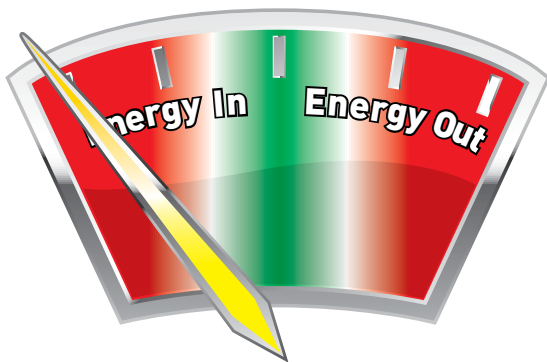
Overcome your barriers

Energy balance

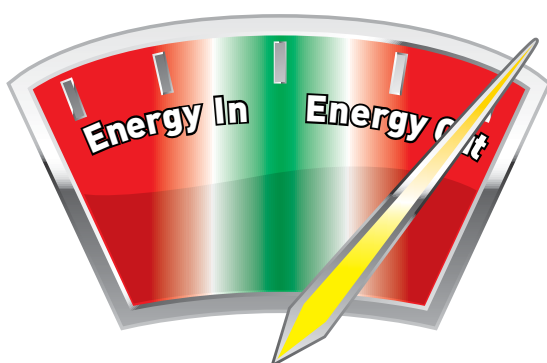
Food gives you energy (measured in **calories**) to enable your body and brain to function. One of the ways this energy is burned off is through physical activity.



To stay a healthy weight you need to balance the amount of energy you take in (through food) with the amount of energy you burn off (through physical activity).



If you eat more calories than you burn off through physical activity you will store this spare energy as fat. This may lead to weight gain.



If you eat fewer calories than you burn off, you may lose weight. It is important to remember, even if you are trying to lose weight, you need to eat enough food to give you energy to be active.

Changing habits

It takes time and effort to become more active and change the foods you eat, which are habits you have developed over many years. The first thing to do is to think about where you are now and what it is you would like to change.

Over to you...

1. Take a good look at your family's current lifestyle. You can learn a lot from writing down what you do. Help your child use the diary in the back of their book and keep a record of everything you and your child eat, and all the physical activities you do.

2. Ask yourself some honest questions.

a. Mealtimes. Does everyone in your family eat regular meals? How big are your portions?

b. Fruit and vegetables. How many portions do you eat per day? (recommended amount is at least 5 portions a day.)

c. Water. Are you drinking enough? (It is recommended you drink about 6-8 glasses of fluid a day - water is one of the healthiest choices.)

d. Snacking. How regularly do you snack and what do you snack on? Could you choose healthier alternatives?

e. Physical activity. How active is your family? (Recommended level for children - at least one hour per day; recommended level for adults - at least 30 minutes 5 times per week.)

3. Decide what you are going to focus on and set yourselves a goal. Your goal should be specific, realistic and something you can measure. If your goal becomes too easy, make it more difficult; if it is too challenging, make it easier.

DOs and DON'Ts of setting goals



DO write your goal down and record your progress on a chart or in a diary.



DO involve your child. If you set goals together you are more likely to stick to them.



DO use rewards to motivate your family (but avoid food as a reward).



DON'T try and do everything at once. Focus on one thing at a time, then, when it becomes a habit, move on to the next thing.



DO break your goal down into small, realistic steps. e.g if your goal is to increase your water intake, set yourself a mini-goal to drink 2 glasses a day for the first week, then gradually increase it as each step becomes easy until you reach 6-8 glasses.



DON'T beat yourself up if you have an off-day - it happens to everyone!



DO congratulate yourself when you achieve something new.



Being a positive role model

You may have heard the saying “children are like sponges”. They look up to you as an adult and they pick up on what you do and say every day. One of the best ways you can help your child is by practising healthy behaviours yourself.

Overcoming barriers

Barriers are negative attitudes that stop you doing what you intend to do. For example, you might decide to put off your walk today because it is raining.

But if you think more positively, you might decide to go for a walk anyway with an umbrella, or perhaps to do an exercise video instead. In this example it is not the weather stopping you being active - it is the way you are thinking!

Here are some common examples of negative barriers and positive solutions:

Negative Barrier	Positive Solution
“I don't have time”	“I must make time by changing my priorities”
“It's mean not to have any biscuits in the house”	“I'm not being mean, I'm doing it for my child's health. Instead of having biscuits in all the time, we'll buy them only occasionally”
“I don't like exercising in front of others”	“Everyone's too bothered about themselves to be looking at me. The benefits I'm getting from exercise are more important than what I look like”

Over to you...

Take a piece of paper and jot down the positive and negative behaviours you notice your child copy.

In what ways are you a positive role-model?

How could you become a better role-model?

Over to you...

What stops you from being active or eating healthily?
How could you change the way you think to overcome these barriers?

Write down some positive solutions. Then stick these up where you will see them so you can overcome your barriers whenever they arise!

Underneath every “can't do” barrier, there is a “can do” attitude you can control



Healthy eating



Eat a healthy balance from all food groups, including at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day



Replace fatty and sugary foods with healthier alternatives



Control portion sizes and remember, children's 'portions' should be smaller than adults



Eat breakfast for a healthy start to the day



Drink plenty of water



What is healthy eating?

Healthy eating means taking in the right amount of nutrients our body needs by eating a balanced variety from different food groups.

What healthy eating is not

Healthy eating is not dieting. Any diet that requires you to cut out whole food groups, or take in your nutrients through a drink or "shake", is not a healthy approach to eating.

Why is healthy eating important?

Food is the fuel that your bodies need for energy, to function properly and to grow and develop. A healthy diet at an early age will help to develop good eating habits later in life and help to reduce the risk of diseases such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and stroke.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Food groups

1. Fruit and vegetables

Your diet should be rich in fruit and vegetables. Fruit and vegetables are a source of fibre and contain vitamins such as A, C and E which are essential for good health

- Aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day
- One portion is equal to a handful (e.g a child portion should be smaller than an adult's)
- Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and unsweetened fruit juice all count towards your 5-a-day (however, juice only counts as one portion however much you drink)
- Beans can also count towards your 5-a-day but only once!
- Limit fruit juice to one glass a day with a meal - too much can be bad news for teeth



2. Starchy foods (e.g bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, cereal, oats etc.)

These foods should make up about 1/3 of your diet and are excellent sources of carbohydrate (which gives you energy), vitamins and minerals. Wholegrain varieties contain a lot of fibre, which keeps you fuller for longer and helps digestion.

- Include these foods with each meal and as healthy snacks
- Try to go for wholegrain and wholemeal varieties



3. Non-dairy sources of protein (e.g meat, fish, eggs, beans, nuts, seeds, quorn, lentils etc.)

You should include moderate amounts of these foods in your diet. They provide you with protein (essential for growth and repair), iron (important for healthy blood) and other vitamins and minerals such as zinc and B12.

- Choose lean cuts of meat and remove the skin from chicken
- Try and eat two portions of fish a week, including one oily fish such as salmon, mackerel or sardines

4. Milk and dairy foods (e.g yoghurt, cheese, fromage frais)

You need a moderate amount of these foods which are important sources of calcium. Calcium is essential for developing strong bones and teeth, and particularly crucial in childhood.

- Aim for 3 servings each day
- Try and choose low fat varieties such as semi-skimmed milk, low fat yoghurt and reduced fat cheese
- From the age of two, children can start having semi-skimmed milk and products as long as they're eating well. From the age of five, skimmed milk and products can be introduced

5. Foods and drinks that are high in fat and / or sugar (e.g crisps, chocolate, sweets, sugary drinks, cakes, ice cream etc.)

Limit these and have them only occasionally in small amounts. High sugar foods and drinks can also lead to tooth decay. If you enjoy these foods it is important you do not try and cut them out altogether - a little of everything is fine, and avoiding them will only lead to more temptation!

Staying hydrated

Aim to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day water is one of the healthiest choices (more if you are very active).

Some notes about fat

There are different types of fats, and you do need some fat in your diet to give you energy and help you absorb some vitamins.

- Go for unsaturated fats which can be found in olive oil, oily fish, avocados, nuts and seeds
- Try and reduce the amount of saturated fats (bad fat) in your diet. These are the types of fats that are found in crisps, biscuits, cream, pastries, butter etc.
- Try and avoid trans fatty acids (also known as hydrogenated fat)

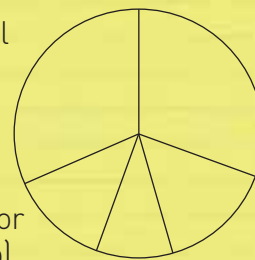
Extra Salt

You do need some salt for your body to work properly, but often salts are hidden in foods and many people eat too much salt without realising. Too much salt can lead to high blood pressure, and increase risk of cardiovascular disease.

- Foods often high in hidden salt include ready meals, tinned foods, packet soups and sauces, tomato ketchup, bacon, ham, hard cheese, crisps etc.
- Avoid adding salt when cooking or to food at the table
- Choose foods with “no added salt” and check labels for salt amounts

Over to you...

Copy the eatwell plate onto a piece of A4 paper (with 5 blank sections correctly sized for each food group).



Write down everything you eat and drink for one day and put it into the appropriate food groups.

Now do the same for your child.

- How balanced are your diets?
- How many portions of fruit and vegetables are you eating?
- Are there any sections that are too empty or too full?
- How could you improve your diets?

Recommended Maximum Daily Salt Intake

Under 12 months	less than 1g
1-3 years	2g
4-6 years	3g
7-10 years	5g
11+ years	6g

Putting healthy eating into practice

Snacking

It is ok to snack, and often children need something in between meals to keep them going. But it is important to make healthy choices to prevent weight gain.

- **Remove the temptation!**

Don't stock fatty or sugary snacks in the house.

- **Make the healthy choice the easy choice.**

Keep a full fruit bowl on the table, and have chopped up fruit and vegetables ready to eat in the fridge.

- **Replace favourites with healthier or snack-size versions.**

e.g baked instead of fried crisps, choose low fat and low salt snacks, see table for examples. Save sugary foods and drinks to meal times only.



Healthy snack ideas

- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- Chopped carrot sticks, cucumber sticks, sugar snap peas, baby corn or a handful of cherry tomatoes (for a dip, add low fat houmous or soft cheese)
- Yoghurt or fromage frais (low sugar/fat variety)
- Rice-pudding or jelly with fruit (sugar free varieties)
- Low fat cheese spread on low salt crackers or toast
- Unsalted nuts or seeds (e.g pumpkin, sunflower)
nb Children under 5 should not be given whole nuts
- Crumpets, English muffins, or wholemeal toast (use low-fat spread)
- Wholemeal plain scones
- Plain rice-cakes or oatcakes
- Glass of semi-skimmed milk or water

“Mum! I'm hungry!”

It is difficult for children to know the difference between hunger and craving. So when your child says they are hungry, don't just take their word for it.

- **Sometimes children confuse hunger with thirst.** Offer them a drink of water instead.
- **If your child is truly hungry they will eat anything.** So don't give in when they say no to that apple!
- **Try talking to your child about how they feel,** and the differences between hunger, craving and thirst, as this will help them recognise their own fullness signals.

- **It takes fullness signals 20 minutes to reach your brain.** This can cause people to overeat because they don't realise how full they are getting. So if your child says they are still hungry after their main meal - instead of moving straight onto dessert, wait 20 minutes. You'll be surprised how quickly they forget about that pudding!
- **If you suspect your child is not really hungry,** do something with them to take their mind off it. Playing games, making things and physical activity are all great for this.



Trying new foods

It can be difficult to get children to try new foods, and sometimes nagging makes the situation worse. Try these approaches instead.

- **Use a wallchart and rewards.** Tick off the foods your child tries, give sticky stars, praise them and let them choose a reward (not food!).
- **Take small steps and don't give up** If your child refuses to eat a food, ask them to take three bites. Next time four bites, and so on. It may take 10-20 times of tasting a food before they like it, so don't give up on the first try.
- **Give your child a choice,** e.g would they rather try the peas or the carrots?
- **Involve your child.** Ask them to lay the table, get drinks ready, chop fruit and vegetables, or help you cook.
- **Make healthy eating fun,** e.g make colourful pictures, fruit kebabs, or homemade pizzas. Hide vegetables in sauces, soups or mashed potato.
- **Don't tell your child what they "don't like".** Instead encourage them to try it again - they might like it now.
- **Be a role model.** If you won't try something new, why should your child?



Breakfast

Breakfast is one of the most important meals of the day. After 10-12 hours without food your body needs some energy. Breakfast helps with weight control, concentration, and stops you feeling tired and sluggish.

Breakfast tips

- If mornings are a rush find out if your child's school has a breakfast club.
- Remember to take small steps. If you don't eat breakfast now, try eating it once or twice a week, then build from there.
- Make a wallchart and write what you and your child are going to eat for breakfast each day. Tick it off as you go.

Try these ideas for a healthy breakfast.

- Wholegrain cereal
- Sprinkle fresh or dried fruit on cereal to sweeten it
- Wholemeal toast with low fat spread
- Porridge with chopped up fresh or dried fruit
- Scrambled, poached or boiled eggs with toast
- Toasted bagel with low fat cream cheese
- Natural yoghurt with chopped up fruit and seeds
- Fruit to help towards your 5 a day
- Smoothies made with fresh fruit and juice or milk and yoghurt

Healthy lunchboxes

A healthy lunchbox should provide a good balance and variety of food. If you are stuck for ideas, try making lunchboxes colourful and exciting. Ask your child to help and let them have a say in the foods that are included.

As a guide, a healthy lunchbox should contain:

- 1. A starchy food** - e.g wholemeal bread, pasta, rice or couscous
- 2. At least two pieces of fruit and vegetables** - e.g apple and carrot sticks, banana and cherry tomatoes, melon chunks and dried apricots or salad in sandwiches
- 3. Some protein** - e.g tuna, cheese, ham, chicken, salmon, egg, peanut butter or houmous
- 4. A portion of dairy** - e.g drink of milk, pot of yoghurt or cubes of cheese
- 5. A drink** - e.g bottle of water, unsweetened fruit juice or drink of milk



Takeaways

There is nothing wrong with a takeaway now and again, but it is important to choose wisely and keep portions small.

They are often high in saturated fat and packed with hidden salt and calories.

Use the table below to help you make healthy choices.

TRY

AVOID

General

Water, low-fat milk
Extra vegetables
Dishes that are boiled, steamed, oven-baked or grilled
Salads

Fizzy drinks, full fat milk
Extra dressings, creams
Dishes that are deep-fried, lyonnaise, en crouete, au gratin or sauteed

Chippy / Burger bars

Small plain burgers with salad
Sharing a portion of chips
Fruit bags

Large or supersize portions
Extra salt
Food cooked in batter
Sausages / pies / pastries

Pizza / Italian

Thin pizza bases
Vegetable toppings
Tomato-based pasta

Stuffed crust / deep pan bases
Pepperoni / salami toppings
Creamy/ cheese-based pasta

Indian

Tomato-based curry with lots of vegetables
Vegetable, lentil or bean dishes
Boiled rice, chapati

Cream-based curry (e.g Korma, Pasanda, Masala)
Fried rice, naan
Poppadoms, bhajis and samosas

Chinese / Thai

Stir fried, steamed or poached dishes
Boiled rice
Plain noodles

Deep fried or battered dishes (e.g Prawn toast, prawn crackers, spring rolls etc.)
Fried rice

Sandwich shops

Wholemeal or seeded breads
Lean meats (e.g Turkey, chicken)
Extra salad

Be cautious with salad dressings - can be high in fat
High fat meats (e.g salami, bacon)
Large baguettes
Mayonnaise

Food Labelling

Nutritional information on food packaging is always listed per 100g or 100ml (some foods also contain amounts per portion).

This helps you compare products and make the healthiest choice.

Use the chart below to see if a product is high or low in fat, sugar and salt.



Nutrient	A lot (per 100g)	A little (per 100g)
Fat	20g or more	3g or less
Saturated fat	5g or more	1g or less
Sugars	15g or more	5g or less
Sodium	0.5g or more	0.1g or less
Salt	1.25g or more	0.25g or less

Tips for reading labels

- Sometimes salt is listed as **sodium**. Multiply this by 2.5 to work out the amount of salt.

SALT = SODIUM X 2.5

- Calories are listed as **energy (kcal)**
- Sugars are listed as **carbohydrates (of which sugars)**
- Saturated fat is listed as **fat (of which saturates)** or sometimes just **saturates**

Some manufacturers use the **traffic light labelling** system, which has been developed by the Food Standards Agency.

This helps you see straight away if it is high, moderate or low in fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt.

The more green lights the healthier the choice.

Mostly red = High fat/sugar/salt. Eat only occasionally.

Mostly amber = Moderate fat/sugar/salt. Eat in moderation.

Mostly green = Low fat/sugar/salt. Eat freely.



Further information is available on the Food Standards Agency website www.eatwell.gov.uk.



Portion sizes

As well as what you eat, it is important to think about the amount you eat. **Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs)** show the approximate amount of nutrients (per day) recommended for a healthy diet. These will depend on how old you are, how active you are and whether you are male or female. **Below is a guide only.**

Adult GDAs

	Female	Male
Energy (kcal)	2000	2500
Fat (g)	70	95
Saturated fat (g)	20	30
Total Sugars (g)	90	120
Protein (g)	45	55
Salt (g)	6	6

Tips for reducing portions

- **Eat slowly, and stop eating when you feel full** (even if your plate is not empty). Encourage your child to do the same.
- **Serve food on smaller dishes.** It will look like there is more food.
- **Remember drinks contain calories too!** Limit fruit juice to one glass a day, avoid fizzy and sugary drinks, and try water instead - it contains no calories and is an important part of a healthy diet.



Child GDAs

Age (yrs)	Girl 4-6	Boy 4-6	Girl 7-10	Boy 7-10	Girl 11-14	Boy 11-14	Girl 15-18	Boy 15-18
Energy (kcal)	1550	1700	1750	1950	1850	2200	2100	2750
Fat (g)	60	65	70	75	70	85	80	105
Saturated Fat (g)	20	20	20	25	25	25	25	35
Total Sugars (g)	75	85	85	100	90	110	105	140
Protein (g)	20	20	28	28	41	42	45	55
Salt (g)	3	3	5	5	6	6	6	6

(GDAs taken from the IGD report - Best practice guidance on the presentation of guideline daily amounts, 2006)

Other things to consider

Age and gender. Children should have smaller portions than adults. If your child is eating adult-sized portions, it is likely they will put on weight.

Physical activity levels. Physically active people need bigger portions (to replace the energy they are burning off) than people who are inactive.

Energy density. High energy-dense foods (e.g chips, sausages, chocolate, pastries, biscuits, butter etc.) have a high amount of calories in a small amount of food. Therefore, your portions should be smaller than if you are eating low energy-dense foods, which have far fewer calories in the same amount of food (e.g fruit and vegetables, salad, wholegrain rice and pasta etc.).

High energy-dense foods • High in calories • Smaller portion



Low energy-dense foods • Low in calories • Bigger portion





Money-saving tips

Healthy eating does not need to cost more. In fact, it could actually save you money.

- **Plan meals in advance, make a shopping list and stick to it!** This will reduce waste, and help you eat well at the same time.
- **Cook extra and freeze the leftovers for another day.** Fish pie, bolognese sauce, cottage pie, chilli, stews, soups etc. are great for this.
- **Stock up on healthy snacks and take them out with you.** It is much cheaper to buy things in bulk from the supermarket. And if you're prepared, you're less likely to buy fatty or sugary snacks during the day.

USEFUL NUTRITION WEBSITES

www.eatwell.gov.uk (Food Standards Agency) Information about the eatwell plate, food hygiene and reading labels.

www.salt.gov.uk (Food Standards Agency) Information about salt and health.

www.5aday.nhs.uk (NHS) Tips for including more fruit and vegetables in your diet. Recipes, games, wallcharts etc.

www.nutrition.org.uk (British Nutrition Foundation) Information about nutrition and health - including dental health, vegetarian and vegan diets.

www.milk.co.uk (The Dairy Council) Information and factsheets about dairy foods.

www.whatsinsideguide.com GDAs, reading labels and making healthy choices.



Physical activity



Being physically active is key to staying a healthy weight, and gives you many long-term health benefits



Children need to be active for at least one hour a day, but this can be broken down into smaller chunks



Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 5 days per week



Make physical activity fun, ask your child what they enjoy doing and do it with them!



Any physical activity counts - so find ways of fitting it into your lifestyle (e.g take the stairs instead of the lift, walk your child to school, play a family game instead of watching TV)

What is physical activity?



Physical activity is any movement that raises your heart rate. It can be vigorous (e.g sports), moderate (e.g brisk walking/jogging) or light (e.g yoga).

Exercise is physical activity that is planned (e.g aerobics, jogging, spinning etc.).

Lifestyle activity is physical activity that is spontaneous or part of the daily routine (e.g play, housework, gardening, walking to school etc.).

Any movement you make is a form of physical activity, but the intensity you move at will determine the benefits you gain from it.

How active do you need to be for health benefits?

Adults - at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity 5 days per week (physical activity where you can talk at the same time, but not as easily as when you are chatting normally).

Children - at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. This does not need to be done all at once. It can be broken down into smaller chunks (e.g 10 minutes walking to school, 20 minutes football, 10 minutes walking home, 20 minutes playing out on a bike).

Why is it important to be physically active?

Physical activity leads to many health benefits, including...

- Improved fitness levels and energy
- Improved heart and lung function
- Improved circulation and blood pressure
- Improved muscle tone and flexibility
- Improved weight control
- Improved metabolic rate
- Improved general health
- Improved immune system
- Improved sleep
- Improved wellbeing and self-esteem
- Reduced stress and depression
- Reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes and illness

Over to you...

Use your child's activity diary to record your family's physical activity levels for a week.

How active are you?

How do your levels of physical activity compare to the recommended levels?

What goals could you set yourselves to become more active?

Tips for increasing your family's physical activity



Physical activity is something the whole family can take part in. Whatever your age, there will be some form of activity for you. Even women who are pregnant can take part in physical activity (in fact there are many benefits from doing so), but it is important you see your GP first.

- **Find out what your child enjoys.**

Young children enjoy spontaneous play - the less rules, the more fun, the better. Older children usually prefer more structured activity with others of a similar age and ability. But every child is different, and the best way to find out is to ask your child, and introduce them to a range of ideas and activities.

- **Put aside time to play with your child.**

Physical activity can be a great way to bond with your child.

Try teaching your child games from when you were young. They will love being with you and watching you have fun. Plan family outings at weekends, and set up treasure hunts in and around the house.

- **Use active transport.**

Getting from A to B is one of the easiest ways to increase your physical activity (especially if your spare time is limited). Encourage your child to cycle or walk to school, get off the bus a stop early, and park your car as far from the supermarket entrance as you can.

- **Make household chores fun.**

Housework can burn up a lot of calories, so involve your child too. Put on some music and dance while you vacuum!

- **Make the active choice.**

Take the stairs instead of the lift or the escalator.

- Reduce TV and computer time. Replace at least half an hour of TV / computer time a day with something active - even light activity is better than sitting still.

- **Birthdays.**

Choose active gifts (e.g scooter, bike, football) and active parties (e.g swimming, treasure hunts, relay races).

- **Join activity and sports clubs.**

Find out what clubs there are in your area. If your child is afraid to go on their own, encourage them to take a friend. If your child enjoys competitive sport, it is important to support them and encourage them to keep this up.

- **Let your hair down!**

Let your child see you being active - you are the best role model for your child.

Want more ideas?

In your child's book there are games and activities to keep them active around the house.

Remember... EVERY LITTLE HELPS!

If you don't have time for a full session of activity, don't put it off completely. Even 10 minutes of good activity is better than nothing.

Staying safe and...

...injury free



Whenever you exercise, follow these guidelines to reduce your risk of injury.

- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. This includes wearing the correct safety wear, especially when cycling or roller blading.
- Always warm up and cool down. This can help prevent over-stretching of muscles.
- Always seek expert advice and instruction when trying something new, or buying your own exercise equipment. Many injuries occur due to improper technique.
- Stop exercising immediately if you experience any pain or swelling of joints. Seek medical attention if discomfort persists.
- Seek advice from your GP if you are beginning an exercise regime for the first time in a number of years, you have a medical condition, or you have a history of heart disease in your family.





Lifestyle and wellbeing



Listen to your child and ask them how they feel - agree healthy changes together and try and avoid nagging



Praise your child for their positive behaviours



Encourage open communication about weight, lifestyle and feelings



Ensure your child gets enough sleep



For help in dealing with difficult issues, turn to free helplines such as **Parentline Plus (0808 800 2222)** and **Bullybusters (0800 169 6928)**



Frequently asked
questions?

I have been told my child is overweight. What does this mean?

Your child's weight falls outside the healthy range for their age, height and sex. There are many possible reasons for this and it is normal to experience mixed emotions - you may feel surprised, angry or even guilty. The important thing to remember is you are not alone, and by making a few small changes you can get things back on track.

Why does it matter if my child is overweight?

Being overweight increases the risk of lifestyle diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and ill health. This risk can be reduced by getting into healthy habits from an early age.

What can I do about my child's weight?

Your child may have put on weight because the food they are eating is not balanced with their physical activity.

This could mean they are eating too much, they are not active enough, or (in most cases) a bit of both. By increasing your child's physical activity, and making gradual changes to the foods they eat, you can help them become a healthy weight.

It is often easier to make changes with support from a professional, or a group. Visit your local GP to find out what support for overweight children is available in your area.



How can I talk to my child about their weight?

Bringing up the issue of weight can be very difficult. There is no right or wrong way, but the following might help.

- **Be open and understanding.** It is likely your child knows they are overweight and it will help them to talk about it.
- **Praise and point out the special qualities of your child.** Let them know everyone is different and there is more to a person than their weight.
- **Focus on healthy messages about the benefits of eating well and being active** (which in turn will help control their weight).
- **Introduce changes as a 'healthy lifestyle' for all the family** rather than a 'diet' for the overweight child.
- **Take the chance to talk about weight when it causes difficulties** (e.g. comments from others, clothes shopping etc.).
- **Think about your own weight-related behaviour.** How does this affect your child? Avoid frequent weighing (of yourself or your child), this is not necessary and could lead them to become pre-occupied with weight.
- **Ask your child open questions about how they feel,** rather than assuming they feel a particular way. (e.g. "how did that make you feel?" rather than "did that make you feel sad?").

What can I do if my child is being bullied?



If your child is being bullied, you may feel a number of emotions including anger, frustration, helplessness and fear. It is important you try and contain these emotions.

- **Take time to think about the best thing to do.** Do not rush into school demanding to see the head/the bully/the bully's parents. It may be tempting to sort out the problem yourself but this reaction could make the situation worse and might make your child scared to open up to you.
- **The first and most important step is to listen to your child.** Allow them to tell their story in their own words.

- **Write down exactly what happened** (according to your child), so that when the time is right to talk to a teacher the facts are right. Encourage your child to keep a diary of bullying incidents. Inform your child's school and be prepared as they may have a different version of events.
- **Move at your child's pace,** by giving them the time and space needed to offload.

- **Tell your child that you love them** and do what you can to make their life outside school fun and enjoyable.



Turn to helplines such as **Parentline Plus (0808 800 2222)** or **Bullybusters (0800 169 6928)**. Further information can be found at www.childline.org.uk and www.bullybusters.org.uk



SLEEP

18 months - 3 years	12-14 hours per night
3 - 5 years	11-13 hours per night
5 - 12 years	10-11 hours per night
Teens	9.25 hours per night

I have heard that sleep is important in a healthy lifestyle. How much sleep does my child need?



How can I help my child get the right amount of sleep?

- Limit fatty foods during the day
- Encourage outdoor and physical activity
- Encourage your child not to watch TV/play on the computer before going to bed. You could consider taking the TV and computer out of the bedroom (including your own!)
- Encourage your child to use the bed only for sleeping
- Try not to let older children sleep during the day, if they do limit it to a maximum of 30 minutes
- Try not to let your child drink any caffeine in the evening
- Make sure that your child is comfortable in their room

Activity Contacts

Wirral has 9 sport and leisure centres. For a full list of activities please contact your nearest centre.

Europa Pools, Birkenhead (0151) 666 5555 *All children swim free during school holidays!

Marine Lake, West Kirby (0151) 625 2510

*Available all year round - activities include sailboarding, dinghy sailing and canoeing.

Grange Road Sports Centre, Birkenhead (0151) 653 1303

Guinea Gap Baths and Recreation Centre, Riverview Road, Wallasey (0151) 639 9792

Leasowe Recreation Centre, Twickenham Drive, Leasowe (0151) 677 0916

West Kirby Concourse, Grange Road West, West Kirby (0151) 929 7801

Wirral Tennis & Sports Centre, Valley Road (0151) 670 0397

Woodchurch Leisure Centre, Carr Bridge Road, Woodchurch (0151) 677 9433

Oval, Old Chester Road, Bebington (0151) 645 0596

Holiday Playschemes (Community Centres)

All year round playschemes are in operation which provide a wide range of imaginative play opportunities for children aged 5 - 14. All schemes are 'open access' and are not intended to provide supervised child care facilities.

For details contact:

Beechwood Community Centre - (0151) 678 3939

Charing Cross Methodist Community Centre - (0151) 647 4366

Gautby Road Play and Community Centre - (0151) 652 5645

Livingstone Street Play and Community Centre - (0151) 647 7587

Leasowe Adventure Playground - (0151) 639 3060

New Ferry Village Hall - (0151) 643 1393

Woodchurch Community Centre - (0151) 678 0297

For information or locations of any of the 74 parks in Wirral, including the 4 wheel parks, please contact 666 4870

For details on local orienteering routes please contact 0151 648 4371

For further information on health please contact Wirral Health and Wellbeing team on 0151 630 8383 www.wirralpct.nhs.uk/health/Health_Challenge_Wirral/

It is important to remember that everyone is different and some people will be more prone to weight gain than others. The most important thing for your family's health is that you are eating healthily, you are physically active and you feel good about yourselves.

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