

All parents want their children to be healthy and strong.

Parents have an important job to help their children eat right and be active so they grow as they should and stay at a healthy weight. A healthy diet and exercise also help children to do better in school and become healthy adults. For more information about children's weight, go to www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obesityinchildren.html.

- All children should see their doctor every year for a check-up where they are weighed and measured. The doctor or nurse will tell you if your child is at a healthy weight or not.
- If your child is overweight, the doctor or nurse will tell you what to do – usually easy changes that will help the whole family. You may also ask to see the clinic dietitian for help.

Physical activity tips to help prevent overweight in children

- Limit how much time your child spends in front of the TV and computer (“screen time”) to less than 2 hours a day. It's best if children under age 2 have no screen time.
- Build physical activity into your child's daily life, such as walking or biking instead of getting a ride, walking the dog, and doing indoor and outdoor chores.
- Encourage lots of outdoor playtime with friends.
- Be active together as a family and set a good example to your child by staying active.
- Offer your child chances to take part in sports, fitness and outdoor activities. Many are low cost or will reduce fees if needed.
- Consider having your child take part in community service projects that require physical activity.



Personal fitness challenges and websites

President's Challenge
www.presidentschallenge.org

Let's Move
www.letsmove.gov

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Programs and facilities to help youth and families stay active

School programs

Schools offer school sports teams, intramural and club sports, active after school clubs, and exercise rooms. Check with your child's school about how he or she can learn skills and be active. Ask about reduced fees if needed.

Local recreation departments

Check with the Parks and Recreation Department in your community to see if they offer fitness programs and facilities, and lower fees for families that need them. In Madison, check with Madison School Community Recreation (MSCR) at 204-3000 or www.mschr.org.



Local and county parks

Local parks make it fun and easy to stay active all year. There are walking trails, bike trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, sand volleyball, golf, ski trails, skating rinks, sledding hills, beaches and pools. Check with the Parks Department in your community.

- In Madison, go to www.cityofmadison.com/parks or call 266-4711 for a map or park information.
- Dane County Parks offer hiking, biking and ski trails. www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks242-4576

Bike routes and trails

Off road trails are a safe way for families to bike together. Madison and Dane County bike route maps are available at www.madisonareampo.org/maps/mapsbicyclists.cfm or call 266-4336 to request a map.



YMCA

www.ymcadanecounty.org

The YMCA offers classes, sports, pool, gym and fitness center at its three locations. Ask about lower fees if needed. The YMCA also manages youth centers in Mount Horeb, Oregon and Sun Prairie.

711 Cottage Grove Road (Madison East) 221-1571
5515 Medical Circle (Madison West) 276-6606
1470 Don Simon Drive, Sun Prairie 837-8221

Community centers

Many community centers have free or low cost fitness facilities and programs for youth and families. Check out centers near you. These two large centers in Madison also serve people who live outside of Madison.

- **Warner Park Community Recreation Center**
1625 Northport Drive 245-3690
www.wpcrc.com
- **Goodman Community Center**
149 Waubesa Street..... 241-1574
www.goodmancenter.org

Club sports

There are many club sports leagues in Dane County communities. Information is usually passed out at school and listed in community newspapers. Many clubs will reduce fees if needed. These programs have teams and sites in many Dane County communities. Check the websites for teams and sites in your area.

- **Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA)**
www.maysa.org
Age-group teams for boys and girls.
- **Madison College (MATC) Tri-County Basketball League**
www.matcmadison.edu/tri-county-basketball
Age-group teams for boys and girls in 4th-8th grades. School year and summer.
- **Girls on the Run Dane County**
www.girlsontherundaneco.org 227-4687
Girls on the Run for girls in 3rd-5th grades and Girls on Track for middle school girls combines physical fitness and running with learning activities to teach self-respect and healthy living.
- **Dane County Youth Hockey**
www.dcyhc.org
Age-group teams for boys and girls of all ages.

Nutrition tips to help prevent overweight in children

- Breastfeed babies
- Serve low fat 1% or fat free skim milk to children age 2 and older. They need 2-3 cups a day.
- Serve only 100% juice, but not too much: 2-3 ounces a day for children under age 2, no more than 6 ounces a day for children age 2 and older.
- Serve water instead of sweet drinks that have no nutrients, such as soda pop, juice drinks and sports drinks.
- Offer healthy food choices, including plenty of fruits and vegetables, every day.
- Limit how much and how often your child eats foods that are high in fat or sugar but low in nutrients, such as candy and cookies.
- Offer picky eaters a variety of healthy foods and let them choose from those.
- Have family meals and regular snack times.
- Limit how often you eat high-fat foods such as fast-food meals.
- Set a good example to your child by eating healthy foods.
- Don't use food as a reward.
- Never force your child to eat, fight about food, or withhold food as a punishment.
- Use praise, not criticism, to encourage healthy eating.
- Make all children feel accepted, regardless of size.



Nutrition information website

www.nutrition.gov is the U.S. government website with links to nutrition information for parents and children, such as "ChooseMyPlate" and "Let's Move."

Assistance for youth organizations

The **Public Health Department** works with youth organizations to improve food practices. Call 243-0361.

Free and low cost healthy food resources

Food Share Wisconsin (formerly Food Stamps)
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare 242-7400
 Many working families can get a monthly grocery allowance.

WIC Nutrition Program
www.publichealthmdc.com/family/wic 267-1111
 Nutrition education and checks to buy healthy food at the store. For pregnant women and children under age 5. Several locations.

UW Extension – Dane County, Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program 224-3714
 Free in-home nutrition education on topics including meal planning on a budget, feeding children, healthy snacks, and cooking.

SHARE Food Buying Club
www.sharewi.org 1-800-548-2124
 Non-profit food buying club that sells nutritious food at lower cost. Also accepts Food Share. Pick-up sites throughout Dane County.

Partner Shares
www.macsac.org/psp.html 226-0300
 Families with low incomes or special needs can buy vegetables at very low cost.

Community Action Coalition
www.cacscw.org/get_a_garden.php 246-4730
 Find out how to get a plot in a community garden. Many locations.

Farmers' Markets (spring to fall)
 To find a farmers' market near you, call the Reap Food Group at 310-7836 or go to www.reapfoodgroup.org/farmers-markets/farmers-markets



Tips and resources for parents

to keep children at a healthy weight



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