

Health

Exercising and maintaining a balanced diet are key components in rearing healthy adolescents. Studies have shown that regular physical activity and a balanced diet help protect children from developing heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, certain cancers, depression, and anxiety. Creating a healthy environment supports a child's understanding of the importance of a balanced meal. Too often youth are becoming the victims of an over-reliance on "junk foods", ultimately leading to nationwide increases in child obesity and type 2 diabetes. Additionally, the advancement in technology (particularly in entertainment media) has created forums whereby children no longer have to be physically active amongst their peers. In efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle please utilize the tips below and communicate with your child the importance of exercising and maintaining a balanced diet.

Tips for Parents:

- Seek the consultation of a family physician before considering any change to a normal routine
- Plan daily activities that promote cardiovascular exercise
- Create the balance between food and physical activity
- Prepare well-balanced meals
- Exercise with your child
- Make it fun
- Encourage and acknowledge participation
- Be aware of signs of physical or mental illness
- Don't be afraid to communicate

Facts About Nutrition and Exercising:

- Improves attention and concentration level
- Helps manage weight
- Promotes better sleep
- Improves mood
- Strengthens immune system
- Increases endurance
- Prevents heart illness

For more helpful information please visit the following websites:

1. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/index.html>
2. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/index.htm>
3. http://www.jhsph.edu/publichealthnews/press_releases/2007/wang_adult_obesity.html
4. <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/nov2007/niddk-13.html>