



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & YOUTH

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Why is health and wellness important?

The key strategies to feeling and looking your best are to eat well, keep active, and maintain a healthy body weight.

For most people, keeping fit means a work out at the gym—running on the treadmill, lifting weights, or doing aerobics. But being active can also mean walking or bicycling to school or work, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator. It works best when you make it a regular part of your routine, and not something you only do when you have to.

For kids, exercise can mean gym class at school, soccer practice, or karate lessons. It can also mean playing tag, using the monkey bars at recess, or riding bikes with friends and family.

Everyone can benefit from regular, moderate exercise and healthy, balanced eating habits. This includes having a positive attitude about eating and food. A healthy relationship to food means knowing how to read your body’s signals to eat when hungry, and stopping when you’re full.

Taking care of your body’s needs isn’t just about what you eat, but knowing what you’re eating, and when. Planning meals and snacks ahead of time means you are less likely to eat “fast food.” Learning about nutrition will help you cook balanced meals at home and make informed choices when eating out.



**NEGATIVE FEELINGS ABOUT FOOD OR EXERCISE CAN LEAD TO A BROAD RANGE OF HEALTH ISSUES.**

**AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE WITH A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD IS ESSENTIAL TO STAYING HEALTHY.**

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KIDS SHOULD GET AT LEAST 60 MINS OF EXERCISE A DAY. THIS CAN MEAN GYM CLASS AT SCHOOL, SOCCER PRACTICE, OR RIDING BIKES WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

## How do I know if I have unrealistic and unhealthy goals about my body and weight?

- You obsess about counting calories and fat grams in the food you eat, in order to control your weight.
- You skip meals, diet, or fast (not eat for long periods) to restrict your food intake.
- You feel guilty or anxious if you don't work out every day, even if you are feeling tired or sick.
- You avoid participating in sports, activities, or social outings with friends and family because you're self-conscious about the way your body looks.

## What can I do?

- 1 Find a compassionate, consistent parenting style that lets you set firm boundaries and realistic consequences. Fuel your body with well-balanced meals of nutritious, good-tasting food. Doing this instead of dieting gives you a better chance of maintaining a healthy body and weight.
- 2 Don't deny your body necessary nutrients by dieting, skipping meals, or using weight-loss products.
- 3 Stop searching for the perfect diet. Diets don't decrease your size, only your self-esteem.
- 4 Avoid thinking of foods as "forbidden" or "off-limits." Eating shouldn't be associated with guilt or shame.
- 5 Instead of seeing certain foods as "good" or bad," think of them in terms of "a good thing to eat often," or "a good thing to eat occasionally."
- 6 Your body knows what it needs. Listen and respond to what your body needs when you are naturally hungry. When you don't listen, your body will find ways to remind you, like a headache or a growling stomach.
- 7 Eat in moderation. Know when your body begins to feel full and content. For some people, this might mean eating 5 or 6 smaller, well-balanced meals or snacks throughout the day instead of 3 large meals. You should feel satisfied after each meal, not overstuffed or still hungry.
- 8 Eat because you are actually hungry, not because you feel bored, stressed, or lonely.
- 9 Take time to enjoy eating. Sit down and take a break when eating snacks and meals. Chew your food slowly, savouring the taste, smell, and texture of what you're eating.
- 10 Be active, have fun, and participate in sports and other activities you enjoy, regardless of your body shape or size.

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