To Your Helping You & Health Your Family... With All Your **Health Needs**

Taking control of kids' weight issues

Many parents are having conflicts with their children, and they're not over doing homework or cleaning their rooms. The disagreements are about food and how many of today's youth need guidance about what they eat because of pronounced weight gain.

Research indicates that in the United States 1 out of 3 children is now classified as overweight or obese. With less time spent exercising and more time spent in front of the television or with gaming consoles, children are packing on the pounds. Furthermore, with the harried pace many families keep -including two-income households where there may not be ample time to prepare healthy, lower-fat meals -- fast food and convenience items have become the norm.

According to reports from ABCNews, a young child who is obese has a 50 percent chance of becoming an obese adult if he or she is not given help. This also puts the child at risk for heart disease, stroke and diabetes as an adult if the situation is not changed before adulthood.

Experts advise against putting a child on an adult diet. Children have different nutritional needs and there needs to be enough food to fuel a growing body.

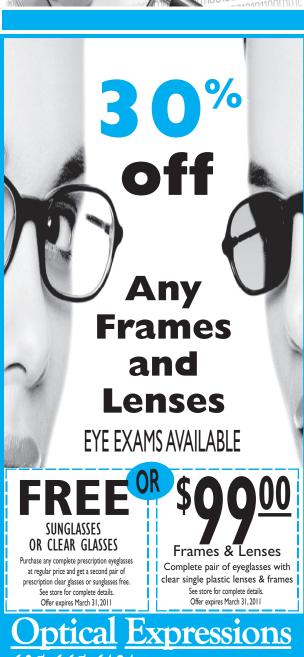
Another thing that parents often contend with is picky eaters who are not apt to simply cut one thing out of a diet and replace it with a healthier alternative.

A smarter idea is to consult with a pediatrician or a nutritionist who specializes in pediatrics. He or she can present a meal plan that fits with the dietary needs of the child but is also healthy enough to promote weight loss. Adult diets may harm a child's health because they limit certain things that a child needs to process vitamins and minerals, such as certain levels of fat.

One of the best things to do is to get children moving. Regular exercise is an ideal way to burn off the calories and fat that is not needed. Implement daily activities, such as taking walks, playtime in the yard and sports games so that kids are moving instead of sitting in front of the television.

Here are some other ideas that may work.

- Limit electronics use so that kids will have to get their fun from physical activities.
- Don't make a big deal about body weight. A 12-year study at Standford University found that parents who are very controlling about food put too much pressure on their children to be thin. This can lead to eating disorders. Parents who push diets may have children who are overweight years later.
- Eat regular meals as a family. Eating meals together instead of grazing and snacking can promote better eating habits.
- Remove unhealthy foods from the home. Kids will eat what is convenient. If there are no unhealthy snacks around, they'll have to choose from others, like fresh fruits and low-fat items.
- Serve meals from the stove. Portion out food items onto each person's plate instead of putting a large quantity of food in the middle of the table. This can help regulate portion sizes and prevent overeating.
- Don't make everything off-limits. Have a few "splurge" items around so that kids won't feel deprived. Low-fat frozen yogurt can satisfy like ice cream. Lower-fat cookies can replace the unhealthy kind. Chances are kids won't even realize they're eating healthier.
- Skip sodas and sugary drinks. Encourage children to drink water, fruit juices and low-fat milk instead of filling up on sugary



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