

- Try to avoid or limit the amount of chips, cookies, treats, candies, butter, margarine, mayonnaise, salt, fried foods, ice cream, sherbet, and sodas your family eats.
- Avoid fried and high-fat foods such as pastries, biscuits, or muffins.

Other ways to make meals healthier:

- Eat whole grain breads and cereals such as whole wheat bread and brown rice.
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Buy smaller pieces of fruit and drink fruit juices in small amounts.
- Use the smallest possible amount of fat, oil, or butter when cooking.
- Use vegetable cooking oil spray instead of liquid oil, shortening, butter, or margarine.
- Try baking, broiling, roasting, steaming, or grilling instead of frying.
- Choose lower fat meats (chicken, lean beef, or turkey).
- Use fat free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk, cheese, and yogurt.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

riht@uscridc.org
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202 • 347 • 3507
Fax: 202 • 347 • 7177
www.refugees.org

For more information about childhood obesity on the Internet, please visit:

American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

The U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org

Medline Plus
www.medlineplus.gov



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American Obesity Association

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Childhood Obesity



www.refugees.org

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 Upholding Freedom since 1911*

Obesity is when a person has too much body fat. Obesity in children and teens is a serious health issue. Obesity may lead to many health problems that last into adulthood. Childhood obesity can lead to high blood pressure, stroke, and heart attack.

WHY DO CHILDREN BECOME OBESE OR FAT?

The most common causes of childhood obesity are:

- Lack of exercise
- Too much sedentary behavior (like watching TV)
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Parents making children eat too much food



HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD AVOID OBESITY?

Teach healthy eating and physical activity habits when children are young. Make healthy eating and physical activity priorities for your entire family. Some ways to promote healthy, active lifestyles for your family are outlined below.

Create an Active Environment:

- Make time for the entire family to join in regular physical activities, like walking, playing soccer (football), or dancing.
- Let children run and play.
- Join other families for group activities like soccer, basketball, or tag.
- Give active chores such as sweeping or mowing the lawn to every family member.
- Encourage your child to try a new sport at school or in your community.
- Limit the amount of time your family spends watching TV.
- Set an example for your child by becoming active yourself.

Create a Healthy Eating Environment:

- Provide your family with healthy meals rich in fruits, vegetables, and grains.
- Prepare foods together. Children enjoy helping and can learn about healthy cooking and food preparation.
- Eat meals together at the dinner table at regular times.
- Tell your children to eat slowly to allow them time to feel full.
- Avoid other activities during mealtimes such as watching TV.



- Avoid foods that are high in calories, fat or sugar such as candy, soda pop, or chips.
- Don't force your child to eat if he or she is not hungry. If your child refuses to eat on a regular basis, consult a healthcare professional.
- Limit fast-food to no more than once per week.
- Avoid using food as a reward or punishment for children.
- Give sweets such as candy only once in a while, not every day.

Eat a Healthy Diet:

- Eat a variety of foods, with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.