

## **Audio Transcript for Lifestyle Habits that Promote Healthy Weight**

### **Home**

Welcome to the Head Start course Lifestyle Habits that Promote Healthy Weight.

### **About This Course**

Parents want to make sure their children develop healthy eating and physical activity habits that promote normal growth, development, and healthy body weight. This course provides parents and caregivers information to help their child develop healthy lifestyle behaviors.

You will learn how growth charts are used to track growth patterns in children, how Body Mass Index is used as a screening tool to assess for possible weight concerns, healthy strategies for portion control, eating out, and consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, and recommendations for physical activity.

### **Section 1: Normal Growth and Development**

#### **Child Growth Charts**

Growth charts are used to assess a child's growth over time and can be used to determine if a child's growth follows a pattern that is typical of normal childhood growth. You have likely seen growth charts like this one when you have taken your child to the pediatrician for his/her well child visits. Click on the highlighted sections of the growth chart to learn more.

Typically as children grow, they follow one of the percentile curves on the growth chart. If a child rapidly increases or decreases across percentile curves, concern may be raised as to what could be causing these changes.

Growth charts are specific to a child's gender and age, thus you will find separate growth charts for boys and girls.

#### **Body Mass Index and Growth Charts**

Body Mass Index (BMI) is used as a screening tool to assess for potential concerns with a child's weight and is calculated based upon a child's weight and height. To assess for potential concerns, a child's BMI is plotted on a growth chart specific to their age and sex to determine the child's BMI-for-age percentile. It is important to interpret a child's BMI with the use of the BMI-for-age growth chart and not just look at the number alone. Use of the age and sex-specific growth charts for assessing BMI is very important.

Visit the website CDC -BMI Percentile Calculator for Children at <https://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx>

## **BMI-for-Age Percentile**

Below are children of the same age and gender. Click each child to see where they fit into the growth chart and what their BMI-for-Age Percentile is. As children get older, their body fat changes. Girls also differ from boys in the amount of body fat they have as they grow. For this example, the chart 2 to 20 years: Boys is used.

[Click to enlarge BMI-for-Age Weight Status Categories](#)

Chase is in the 5th percentile for BMI and therefore is considered underweight. This means that 95% of children of the same age and gender have a BMI greater than him.

Michael is in the 50th percentile for BMI and therefore is considered normal weight. This means that 50% of children of the same age and gender have a greater BMI and 50% have a lower BMI than him.

Tony is the 93rd percentile for BMI and therefore is considered overweight. This means that 93% of children of the same age and gender have a BMI less than him.

## **Understanding BMI Charts**

A child with a BMI-for-age above the 85th percentile on the growth chart is considered overweight. Concern is raised that the child may have excess body fat. However, note that BMI is not a perfect measure, as it is only based on height and weight and not body composition. Because Tony is in the 93rd percentile for BMI, his weight status category is “overweight.”

## **Determine an Action Plan**

Parents should discuss any concerns about their child’s weight with their pediatrician to determine the best plan of action. Be aware that excess weight in childhood can potentially lead to chronic diseases in adulthood. Excess weight gain can lead to chronic diseases such as c Heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, and high cholesterol.

## **Changing Our Habits**

If a child is identified as being overweight, parents should resist placing an emphasis on body weight. Instead, parents can focus on helping the child maintain body weight and develop healthy lifestyle habits while the child continues to grow in height. Focus on developing healthy habits, such as eating healthy, increasing physical activity, and maintaining weight.

## **Section 2: Healthy Lifestyle Habit**

## **Avoid Diets**

Because the preschool child is still growing, it is generally not recommended to place the child on a diet. Why? Restricting the diet may lead to the child losing the ability to recognize the signs of fullness or hunger, sneaking food or overeating when food is available, and having an inadequate intake of nutrients needed to grow.

## **Promoting Healthy Eating Choices**

Instead of restricting your child's diet, center his or her diet on healthy food choices and snacks.

Fruits and vegetables - choose a variety of types and colors and include in every meal

Low-fat dairy such as yogurt, milk, and cheese

Whole grains, such as breads, pasta, cereals (with no added sugars), crackers, granola bars

Click on each to uncover the food groups.

## **Start the day out right!**

Start the day out right by making sure your child eats breakfast! When a child skips breakfast and is hungry, he or she is focusing on food, not necessarily on school work. Eating breakfast helps children with energy needed for the day, concentration so that thoughts are on learning, not on feeling hungry, and focus.

## **The Importance of Breakfast**

Provide your child with a well-balanced breakfast every day. Too often breakfast is associated with sweet foods that can cause the child to miss out on an opportunity to consume important nutrients needed for healthy grow and development.

A healthy breakfast provides vitamins, minerals, fibers from fruit, vegetables, whole grains; protein from eggs, nuts, lean meats; calcium and Vitamin D from milk and low-fat dairy items. A healthy breakfast is important for adults too!

## **Healthy Breakfast Options**

To ensure breakfast is well balanced and contains the nutrients your child needs to grow, aim to include three items from different food groups. Food groups include fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grains, protein, nuts, and beans. Click on the food items and build a healthy breakfast. Strawberries are a great breakfast food that can be eaten alone or added to cereal or oatmeal. Oranges are a sweet fruit and are a great source of Vitamin C. Yogurt contains calcium which supports strong teeth and bones. Try adding fruit to plain yogurt. Whole grain breads provide dietary fiber

which supports a healthy digestive and immune system. Try adding vegetables and other healthy foods to scrambled eggs, omelets or breakfast sandwiches. Spinach can be added to scrambled eggs or omelets and provides the body with fiber, iron, and Vitamin A, C, and K. Potatoes can be eaten as a side or added to eggs to provide healthy dietary fiber. Milk can be added to cereal or consumed alone to provide support to healthy bones and teeth. Ham and other deli meats can be added to eggs or breakfast sandwiches to provide protein. Oatmeal provides an excellent source of dietary fiber. Try adding fresh strawberries or blueberries.

## **Healthy Cooking**

Making healthy choices when dining out is important, but it is just as important to prepare healthy foods at home. Select the food items for basic healthy cooking tips that can be easily tried at home.

Use low-fat or fat free milk, sour cream, cream cheese, and yogurt in recipes. Plain, non-fat Greek yogurt can be used as a substitute for sour cream, a great way to increase the calcium and protein content of a recipe.

Choose lean portions of meat and poultry. Instead of frying, try baking, broiling, roasting, stewing, or stir-frying. For a healthier approach, try trimming off the fat before cooking the meat, removing the skin from the poultry before serving, and draining off the grease that remains after cooking ground meat.

Choose olive, canola, or vegetable oils to cook with since these contain less saturated fat than butter or lard. Saturated fats are generally solid or hard at room temperature, such as butter and lard, and raise LDL cholesterol levels (bad cholesterol) intake should be limited in diet.

Unsaturated fats are generally liquid or soft at room temperature, such as olive or vegetable oils, are found also in nuts, avocados, and fatty fish and decrease LDL cholesterol levels in the body are healthy to consume as part of a balanced diet

Increase fiber content of meals by choosing whole grain rice, pasta, and grains. Double the amount of vegetables in casseroles, soups, and stir-fries and try adding beans to soups, chili, and spaghetti sauce.

## **Limit Eating Out**

With busy schedules and many convenient dining options, eating out has become a way of life for many families. Unfortunately, when children eat out, they tend to consume more unhealthy food choices than when at home.

If your family eats out often, we recommend the Head Start course Eating Out the Healthy Way for some healthy tips!

## **Monitor Beverages with Added Sugars**

Another way to improve the nutritional quality of a child's diet is to monitor what he or she drinks. Consider reducing beverages with added sugars from in your child's diet. Sugar sweetened beverages, such as soda, sweet tea, lemonade and fruit punch, contribute to dental cavities and lack the nutrients needed for growth. If your child frequently drinks sugar-sweetened beverages, we recommend viewing the Head Start course Sugar-Sweetened Beverages.

## **Top Drinking Choices**

Encourage your preschool child to drink beverages with no added sugars. Water, 1% or fat-free milk, and 100% fruit juices are top choices. Read the recommendations for each by selecting the buttons below.

Make water the "go to" drink. Water is the top choice for children to drink throughout the day. Encourage your child to drink water by getting him/her a fun water bottle to carry around.

It is recommended that children age 2 and older consume 1% or fat free milk. Fat free and 1% milk contain the same amount of calcium, Vitamin D, and protein as whole milk without the saturated fat. Schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program only offer fat free and 1% milk to children. This means that at school your child is already drinking fat free or 1% milk! When making the transition to lower fat milk at home, you can share with your child that you are now buying the same milk served at school! Recommended daily serving for children ages 2 to 3 is 2 cups and for children ages 4 to 5 is 2½ cups.

When buying juice make sure the label says 100% juice to ensure you are truly getting fruit juice and not just a fruit-flavored drink. Recommended daily serving for children ages 1-6 is 4-6 oz

## **Consume Less Saturated Fat**

If your child consumes whole or 2% milk, transitioning to a lower fat milk, such as 1% or fat free milk, is a healthy choice. To make the transition easier, remain positive and gradually make the change. Click on the buttons for tips on making the transition easier!

1% and fat free milks contain the same nutrition as whole and 2% milk but without the saturated fat! They contain the same amount of Calcium, Vitamin D and Protein. Click to compare their nutritional value.

Tip 1: Switch over gradually. You may meet with resistance from your child should you switch from whole milk to fat free milk in one step!

Tip 2: Consider buying a container of the milk you normally purchase (i.e. 2% milk) and a container of the milk you are trying to transition to (i.e. 1% milk). Mix the two milks when pouring your child a glass of milk. Gradually decrease the amount of the higher fat milk and increase the amount of the lower-fat milk.

Nutrition comparison of milk

1 percent milk contains 2.5 grams of saturated fat per serving.

2 percent milk contains 5 grams of saturated fat per serving.

1 percent milk contains 2.5 grams of saturated fate per serving.

Whole milk contains 8 grams of saturated fat per serving.

### **Watch out for negatives comments!**

As you work with your child to develop healthy lifestyle habits, try not to place too much emphasis on body weight. Instead, focus on things that your child can change to be healthy and feel great. Be sensitive to using terms like “overweight,” “fat,” “obese,” or making negative comments regarding body weight. Why? Even young children are sensitive to comments about their weight and appearance. Negative comments and an excessive focus on weight and body image can lead to low self-esteem and can have a life-long impact on the child.

## **Section 3: Healthy Lifestyle Habit - Maintaining Weight**

### **Control Food Portions**

One way a child can maintain a healthy weight is to ensure the food portion sizes are adequate. Although parents know that a balanced diet includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy, they may be unsure as to the amount their child should consume daily.

The online resource, ChooseMyPlate, aims at helping Americans eat healthier. The website offers an entire section focused on the needs of preschool children. This resource also offers MyPlate Daily Checklists that guide parents on the daily nutrient needs of their preschool child. Keep in mind that the checklists are only guides aimed that give a general idea of how much their children should be eating. If you desire a specific nutrition plan for your child, consult with a registered dietitian or pediatrician for additional guidance.

### **The Problem With Portion Sizes**

Portion sizes have gotten out of control for individuals of all ages. Fortunately, parents can control the portion sizes their child consumes. Below are a few ideas on how to do this successfully.



Tip 1: Portion into individual-sized servings. Eating straight out of a large bag of trail mix, crackers, pretzels, etc. might entice the child to overeat and not pay attention to his or her hunger levels.

Tip #2: Resist serving your child adult-sized portions or supersized meals. Serve smaller portions at meals and allow your child to request more if still hungry. Use child-sized plates and drinking glasses to give the appearance of a full plate even though the portion sizes are smaller.

Tip #3: Check the food label to see what one serving size is and compare this to what you normally serve your child. Note that the serving size on a label does not reveal how much food you or your preschool child should be eating.

### **What is a serving size?**

When providing food to your preschool child, it is good to be aware of serving sizes. Although it is not necessary to accurately measure the food every time, it is a good habit to roughly estimate the portions.

Estimating serving sizes: Select the serving size to see common items that can be used as close comparisons.

One fourth of a cup is about the size of a golf ball.

One half cup is about the size of a yo yo.

One cup is about the size of a baseball.

One teaspoon is about the size of a die.

One tablespoon is about the size of a game token.

3 ounces of meat, poultry or fish, is about the size of a deck of cards.

### **Find out your serving size!**

Try this activity with your child.

1. Pour the amount of breakfast cereal your child normally eats in a bowl.
2. In a second bowl, pour a serving size of the cereal as noted on the nutrition label (usually about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cup).
3. Compare the two bowls. Are the amounts different?

Try this activity with the amount of cereal you generally eat and compare! Click on the nutrition label to enlarge.

The nutrition label shows that a serving size is equal to one cup and that servings per container is equal to about 14; for children under 4, the serving per container is about 19.

### **Resist Making a Child Clean the Plate**

Allow your child to be sensitive to feelings of hunger and fullness by not forcing him or her to eat everything on the plate. Doing so will help your child develop a healthy lifestyle habit during childhood. An unhappy preschool girl stirs a spoon into her cereal. Why? Forcing a child to eat everything on the plate may override the child's internal cues of hunger and fullness, and encourage the child to eat past the feeling of full.

### **Use Food as Nourishment...Only!**

When working with your child on eating healthy and developing lifelong healthy habits, we want to avoid using food as a reward. As tempting as it might be, do not use ice cream, candy, or other treats as a reward for eating vegetables, fruits, or other foods your child does not want. Find ways other than food to reward your child for good behavior or accomplishments, such as going to the park or having a friend over to play.

### **Resist Restricting Less-Healthy Foods**

Try not to ban your child from eating treats and other favorite foods. All foods can fit into a healthy diet, the key is moderation! Limit portion sizes of less-healthy foods and offer them on occasion, not every day.

Why? Restricting your child from eating favorite foods and desserts may only result in the child wanting these items more or overeating when they are available.

## **Section 4: Healthy Lifestyle Habit Physical Activity**

### **Integrate Physical Activity**

Regular physical activity is important for the health, fitness, and well-being of preschool children. Let's find out why children score big when they stay physically active! Access the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines online at <https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/chapter3.aspx>

### **Staying Fit and Strong**

Regular physical activity helps children maintain a healthy body weight and reduces the chance that children develop risk factors for chronic diseases in adulthood.

Active children tend to have less body fat, greater cardiovascular fitness, and stronger bones and muscles.

### **Test Your Knowledge**

How much time should a preschool child participate in structured and unstructured physical activity daily? Choose the best answer.



Structured activities are specific to child's development and are directed by an adult who knows principles of physical activity.

Unstructured activities are free active play and self-directed and not organized or led by an adult.

### **Refrain from Physical Inactivity**

"Screen time" refers to time spent in front of a screen—watching TV, playing video games, playing on the computer, tablets, or smart phones. The concern with excess screen time is that children are often sitting down and physically inactive.

Physical inactivity increases a child's risk to becoming overweight, trouble sleeping, and attention problems.

### **Screen Time Recommendations**

Depending on the child's age, the American Academy of Pediatrics makes these recommendations regarding "screen time." For children under 2 years old, discourage screen time. Instead, do interactive activities that promote brain development read books, play games, and sing songs. For children 2 years and older, limit screen time to 1-2 hours of quality programming a day. For more information on screen time, view the Head Start course Physical Activity online.

### **Limit Distractions While Eating**

Make eating and talking the only activities allowed at the table. Try to limit any distractions that take your child's attention away from eating. See potential distracters below. Click on the distractions below.

Do not allow your child to bring toys or games to the table. Playing at the table will only serve as a distraction from eating.

Make your table a "no screen" zone, meaning that TVs, cell phones, and video games are turned off during meal times. Be a role model and turn off your cell phone during the meal as well.

Try not to use meal time to complete school work. Instead, use this time to have the family share about their day. Make eating and talking the only activities allowed at the table.

### **Serve as a Role Model**

Finally, be a role model! It is important for parents to model the healthy behaviors they want their child to engage in. Creating healthy lifestyle habits for the family has long-lasting benefits for all! Eat the same healthy foods as your children at meal times. Be active together as a family. For children, the type of activity matters less than the time spent together. Model a positive attitude towards eating healthy and

physical activity. Children are perceptive and can pick up on your opinions. Limit screen time (outside of work) to 2 hours a day. Turn off your cell phone during meals and talk as a family!

### **Conclusion and Certificate**

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this course.

In this course you learned how growth charts are used to track the growth of children and the use of Body Mass Index as a screening tool to assess for possible weight concerns. You also learned strategies to promote healthy eating and physical activity for your preschool child. We hope you will use the information learned in this course to help your child develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Important: To print your Certificate of Completion, please certify that you have finished the course, then click Submit.

### **Name**

Type your name in the box below and click the Next button.