



Childhood obesity: Tips to help your child get fit

Unfortunately, the rate of [childhood obesity](#) in the U.S. has more than tripled in the past 30 years, but these statistics can change if the parents are willing to teach their children how to live healthier lifestyles. It's not all the parents, though. Some fast food restaurants lure kids by offering [toys with kids meals](#), and those kids meals aren't the healthiest. While many parents know the meals aren't healthy, it's hard for the parents to get their children to order healthy when the restaurants entice the kids with the free toy, which is only available if they choose the unhealthy kids meal. In this case, the restaurants could offer healthier options and put the free toys in those meals.

Here are four things you can do to help your child get fit:

1. Go hiking or take a walk in the park. Not only will this help your child, but it's an activity that the entire family can do together.
2. Spend time with your child by working out together. Music is a great motivator, so choose a few [workout songs](#) to play on the stereo while working out together.
3. Gather the family for a game of volleyball, softball or tennis.
4. Keep the pantry and refrigerator stocked with fresh fruits such as bananas, oranges, apples, pears, grapes and peaches instead of cookies and other snacks that are loaded with calories and sugar.

More highlights from this week

If we eat less, exercise more and cut down on our alcohol consumption, our risks for becoming obese and/or developing breast cancer and liver damage could decrease. If we don't eat less, remain inactive and continue to consume large amounts of wine and/or other alcohol, the [excess weight could kills us](#).

More highlights from this week include:

- [Toys children play with can have profound effects on them](#)

- [IBM attempts to tackle obesity with powerful and sophisticated computing tools](#)
- [Understanding restaurant calorie menu postings and the new U.S. health care law](#)
- ["Biggest Loser Couples" compete for a spot in the final four](#)

A tip from Dr. J: Children do learn from their parents

Next time you think your child isn't paying attention to what you do, think again. Children do learn from us, and it's up to us to [set a good example](#), just like Dr. J Senior did for Dr. J.

"Dad is a wonderful example of how doing the right behaviors can lead to a healthy life. He has eaten smart, stayed physically active, kept involved in a field that is mentally challenging and that he loves, and has been involved with family and friends," says Dr. J.

Greatest hits from this week's Lab Notes

Researchers discovered that [calcium builds strong bones](#), drinking two or more alcoholic beverages a day [speeds HIV disease progression](#), and believe it or not, the [internet can actually be good for us](#).

From the archive:

Back in 2008 we learned a few [ways that parents can help their children live healthier lifestyles](#). For instance, if we allow our children to help us in the kitchen instead of shooing them to the other room, they're more likely to try new things rather than hide it in a napkin.

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