



Apart from sleeping, children should not be inactive for longer than 1 hour at a time.

- Be active together as a family
- Limit TV, video, and video game time to no more than 1-2 hours each day.
- No TV or laptop in your child's bedroom.
- Keep your child from viewing shows and ads that may make him/her want things that are not healthy.
- Be sure your child is active at home and preschool or child care.

### Benefits of Being Active

When kids are active, their bodies can do the things they want and need them to do. Why? Because regular exercise provides these benefits:

- strong muscles and bones
- weight control
- decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- better sleep
- a better outlook on life

Healthy, physically active kids also are more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful. And physical competence builds self-esteem at every age.

Source: Bright Futures Parent Handout 3 year visit American Academy of Pediatrics:

<https://wspediatrics.com/uploads/3-year-bright-futures-handout.pdf>

### Kids' Fitness Personalities

Personality traits, genetics, and athletic ability combine to influence kids' attitudes toward participation in sports and other physical activities, particularly as they get older.

1. **Nonathlete:** lacks athletic ability, interest in physical activity, or both
2. **Casual athlete:** interested in being active but isn't a star player; at risk of getting discouraged in a competitive athletic environment
3. **Athlete:** has athletic ability; committed to sport/activity; likely to ramp up practice time



## The American Heart Association's Recommendations for Physical Activity in Children

All children age 2 and older should:

Participate in at least 60 minutes of enjoyable, moderate-intensity physical activities everyday that are developmentally appropriate and varied.

If your child or children don't have a full 60-minute activity break each day, try to provide at least two 30-minute periods or four 15-minute periods in which they can engage in vigorous activities appropriate to their age, gender and stage of physical and emotional development.

Check the following sources for more tips and information:

American Heart Association: [How to Get Your Family Active | American Heart Association](#)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/healthybehaviors.htm>

## Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

Guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recommend that children and adolescents aged 6-17 years should have 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity each day.

**Aerobic:** Most of the 60 or more minutes a day should be either moderate, or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week.

**Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.

**Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 or more minutes of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week.

It is important to encourage young people to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are enjoyable, and that offer variety.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: <https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/physical-activity-guidelines>



## Tips on Getting Your Children to Eat More Fruits and Veggies

### What You Can Do

- Offer fruits and vegetables as snacks.
- Serve salads more often. Teach the appropriate amount of salad dressing and order it on the side at restaurants.
- Try out child-friendly vegetarian recipes for spaghetti, lasagna, chili, or other foods using vegetables instead of meat.
- Include one green leafy or yellow vegetable for vitamin A at each meal.
- Include one vitamin C-rich fruit, vegetable, or juice, such as citrus juices, orange, grapefruit, strawberries, melon, tomato, and broccoli.
- Include a fruit or vegetable as part of every meal or snack. For example, you could put fruit on cereal, add a piece of fruit or small salad to your child's lunch, use vegetables and dip for an after-school snack, or add a vegetable or two you want to try to the family's dinner.
- Be a role model and eat more fruits and vegetables yourself.

### How Much is Enough?

- Visit <https://www.myplate.gov> to find out how much of each food group your child should be getting.
- When shopping for food, start in the area of the store where they keep fresh fruits and vegetables. Stock up. That way you know you always have some on hand to serve your child.
- Avoid buying high-calorie foods such as chips, cookies, and candy bars. Limit or eliminate how much fruit juice you give your child and make sure it is 100% juice, not juice "drinks."
- Eat as a family whenever possible. Research shows that kids eat more vegetables and fruits and less fried foods and sugary drinks when they eat with the entire family.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Pediatric Obesity: Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Strategies for Primary Care

For more information, check: Obesity Prevention: AAP Policy Explained:

[Obesity Prevention: AAP Policy Explained - HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/Obesity-Prevention-AAP-Policy-Explained)

Obesity: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/obesity/Pages/default.aspx>

Obesity Prevention Recommendations for Families: Complete List:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-prevention/families/families-obesity-prevention-recommendations-complete-list/>



#### Helpful Links

Go, Slow, Whoa! A Kid's Guide to Eating Right:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/go-slow-whoa.html>

Nemours Children's Health. Kids and Food: 10 Tips for Parents:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/eating-tips.html?ref=search>

Tips to Help Children Maintain a Healthy Weight:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html>

Preventing Childhood Obesity: Tips for Parents:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/resources/obparnts.htm>

Bam! Dining Decisions App from the CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/bam/mobileapp.html>

"Home for Dinner Mixing Food, Fun and Conversation for a Happier Family and Healthier Kids" and "Eat, Laugh, Talk the Family Dinner Playbook" by Dr. Anne K. Fishel, PH.D.

#### Videos

The Importance of Eating Together for Children: <https://youtu.be/sjpSxqjgaWY>

10-Minute Family Fun Cardio Exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7nrOBBfcYI>

How to Keep Your Family Healthy and Fit : <https://youtu.be/t0VxcGw4vNc>

#### MCEC<sup>®</sup> Resources

- *SchoolQuest<sup>™</sup>* is an interactive tool, specially designed to support highly mobile military-connected parents & students: <https://schoolquest.militarychild.org>
- Military Student Consultants: This program is the portal for all questions student and parent related. You can submit your specific questions concerning transition barriers and receive specialized support. To contact a Military Student Consultant, email [msc@militarychild.org](mailto:msc@militarychild.org)
- The MCEC<sup>®</sup> podcast series covers an array of informative and important topics with guests from all walks of life. Visit [Podbean](#), [Google Playstore](#), or [iTunes](#)
- Health of the Military Family MCEC<sup>®</sup> Podcast <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/health-of-the-army-family-report-guiding-action/id1386801038?i=1000553550636>

#### MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support Resources

- Find other MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support [webinars](#) related to this topic on our official website [MilitaryChild.org](https://MilitaryChild.org)
- Contact your local Parent Support team for workshops offered in your community: <https://www.militarychild.org/programs/parent-to-parent>
- If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to: [Parents@MilitaryChild.org](mailto:Parents@MilitaryChild.org)

MCEC<sup>®</sup> Parent Support empowers military-connected parents with resources to be their child's first and best advocate. Learn more about ways to get involved and stay informed about upcoming webinars, workshops, and additional resources by emailing [Parents@MilitaryChild.org](mailto:Parents@MilitaryChild.org).

Current as of Jan, 2022