

Senior Sense



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Your Health

How to Help an Overweight Grandchild to Achieve a Healthier Weight

More and more children and teens are becoming overweight. This increases their risk for heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep problems, asthma, joint problems and cruel teasing by others. Many grandparents are involved with the feeding and care of their grandchildren. If you are, you can help your grandchildren to eat better and become more active.

Unless a young child is very overweight, weight loss is not the goal. Instead, the goal is to maintain the current weight or slow weight gain while the child gets taller. If the child or teen is very overweight or no longer growing, he or she will need the help of a medical team that specializes in weight loss. Only the child's doctor

and dietitian can decide what the weight goal should be.

Weight control in children requires changes in the entire family's eating and activity habits. If the whole family starts eating better and sitting around less, it will be easier for the child/teen to make the needed long-term changes. **THIS IS NOT A DIET – IT IS A NEW LIFESTYLE THAT WILL MAKE EVERYONE HEALTHIER.** You are an important role model for this child. You need to practice what you preach.

Of course, your role depends on how involved you are with the grandchild. Your role will be more important if you provide regular care than if you visit only a few times a year. However, your attitude and support are very important. Even if you do not agree totally with the new plan, do not voice your concerns in front of the child or teen. Talk to the parents privately if you think things could be handled differently. You may just need more information about why a certain

change has been made. If you have regular care of the child, you may even want to go to some of the doctor visits to hear more about how you can help.

The role of parents and grandparents during meals is to control what is served, how it is prepared, where it is served and when it is served. In contrast, the child or teen decides whether to eat and how much to eat. Surprisingly, younger children often put less food on their plates than adults would, so let them serve themselves if possible.

Try some of these basic changes in food and activity habits to help your grandchild to get healthier:

- Serve a vegetable or fresh fruit at EVERY meal or snack. A good portion size is ½ cup or 1 piece of fruit. Vegetables should be green, orange and yellow, and not just French fries.
- Provide water or low fat or non-fat milk most of the time instead of soft drinks, sweet tea or fruit drinks. If water is not a favorite, add slices of lemon or lime to improve the flavor.
- Limit juice to no more than 1 cup a day. Many children and teens get a lot of calories from juice and other fruit drinks.
- Rarely give energy drinks. These are only for children or teens are very active and sweating for at least an hour a day or who are having

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nausea and vomiting. They are not soft drinks or juice substitutes.

- Limit high-fat, added-sugar foods like cookies, pies, candy and cakes to only once in a while. Do not use food as a reward or comfort. Your encouragement and a big hug are just as effective.
- Eat meals together and not in front of the TV or in the car.
- Encourage one hour of active outdoor play or sports per day. Reduce TV and computer time to two hours or less per day. Play with

them if possible. YOU will benefit as well.

- **DON'T FOCUS ON WEIGHT.** Instead focus on the family getting healthier,

having more fun, developing physical skills and being together.

Most of all, do everything possible to help the child or teen to feel “unique,” but not “different.” Being unique means the child has special skills and talents. Being different means the child/teen feels odd or inferior to other children/teens. By pointing out and praising those unique qualities, you can do a lot to help your grandchild appreciate special qualities.

Fruit Tropicale

½ cup cubed or diced pineapple fresh or canned, drained

½ banana, sliced

¼ cup plain, non-fat yogurt

Mix pineapple and banana together in small bowl. Top with yogurt to serve. Mix yogurt into the fruit to sweeten before eating. Serves 1

Nutrition Information:

Calories:	157
Carbohydrate:	35 grams
Protein:	4 grams
Fat:	0 grams
Sodium:	57 milligrams
Fiber:	3 grams
Cholesterol:	1 gram

Diabetic Exchanges: 2 fruits or 2 carb choices

Your Resources

Mold Season

It is mold season again, which unfortunately in Georgia is nearly every month of the year. Mold spores never really go away; they are always around. They only become a problem when the spores find a moist organic surface on which to grow. This is often walls, ceilings, around windows and doors, carpeting, and on paper or wood products.

In Georgia, mold problems are often caused by moisture coming in from the outside. New construction techniques make homes more energy efficient but can also increase problems associated with indoor moisture. Research from the Forest Products

Laboratory (USDA Forest Service) has shown that short periods of moderate condensation in walls during cold winter months do not necessarily lead to permanent damage; however, high levels of humidity can remain in the home long after the winter season is over. The high humidity can cause moisture problems in the walls and windows.

To eliminate mold problems, you should try to keep the indoor humidity level between 30 and 60 percent. One of the ways to do this is through good ventilation. Use an exhaust fan in the kitchen when cooking and in the bathroom when bathing. Make sure your clothes dryer vents to outside your home and not into the crawl space beneath the house. Other ways to reduce mold problems are to seal around your windows, doors and plumbing so moisture can't enter your home. If you are painting, add mold inhibitors to the paint.

People react differently to mold, so if you can smell a musty odor or see mold, you have a mold problem that needs to be taken care of. The first steps are to locate the source of moisture and eliminate it and then clean up the mold. The Centers for Disease Control does not recommend testing to determine what type of mold is growing in your home. To remove mold from hard surfaces, wash with detergent and water, then disinfect with bleach. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of bleach with one gallon of water. Wet the surface and leave the solution on it for 15 to 30

minutes before wiping it off. Rinse with clean water and dry the surfaces. To clean paper and books, sprinkle them with cornstarch or talcum powder. Porous materials may have to be cleaned by a professional cleaning service. You want to use safe cleaning practices. Wear eye protection, rubber gloves and clothing that can be immediately laundered. Always clean in a well-ventilated area.

For more information on preventing and removing mold from your home, contact your local county Extension Office.

Your Relationships

Care for Caregivers

Rapid advances in medicine, better nutrition, and modern conveniences all contribute to the trend of living longer, healthier lives. For many seniors, however, these years of longer lives include relying increasingly on others for help with daily activities. Whether it's driving someone to a doctor's appointment, preparing meals, or helping with household chores, volunteer caregivers are growing in number. Many caregivers consider caring for a family member or friend in need to be a privilege, but caregiving may eventually take a toll on a caregiver's mental or physical health. It is estimated that 44 million

Particularly for older caregivers, it is reported that these persons have a 63% higher mortality rate than non-caregivers of the same age.

Americans provide unpaid assistance and support to senior adults. The majority of these caregivers suffer from poor health themselves.

Two of the most common conditions among caregivers are depression and substance abuse. Daily obligations, the stress of managing one's own life, time constraints and financial burdens can all contribute to feelings of anger, resentment and hopelessness. A recent study reported that 40%-70% of caregivers have clinically significant symptoms of depression. A related study found that dependence on substances such as alcohol or other drugs is also higher among caregivers. Although these habits may dull immediate pain, they often impair long-term wellness.

While caring for others, caregivers often neglect their own care. Since many caregivers have little free time, preventive care such as routine medical exams, regular exercise, or proper eating habits tend to be neglected. This neglect can result in shorter life spans for caregivers.

Since many of these harmful consequences build gradually, it may be difficult to detect or even recognize that they exist. However, there are many options and resources available for caregivers to help prevent such outcomes.

- **Home Health Care:** Skilled service workers, such as nurses, speech

pathologists, or medical social services, will come to an individual's residence to assist in short-term care. For more information about home health care in your area, visit www.medicare.gov and click on "Compare Home Health Agencies in your Area."

- **Transportation:** Volunteer or paid transportation services can pick-up and drop-off people in need, eliminating the need for the caregiver to drive. For more information on transportation options, contact your local Area Agency on Aging (listed under "aging," "elderly," or "senior services" in the government section of your telephone directory) for various options.

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- **Meal Programs:** Good nutrition can improve the physical and mental health of persons in need. To help improve nutrition and reduce some of a caregiver's work, many organizations provide meals for seniors. These services include "meals on wheels" delivered to homebound seniors as well as meals at community senior centers. The National Elderly Nutrition Program, funded by the Administration on Aging, provides meals to older persons in need and their spouses. If these meals are not available in your area, contact local restaurants and your local grocery

store. Some businesses will deliver to homes for a fee, and some even provide a discount for seniors.

- **Senior Centers:** Local senior centers provide excellent opportunities for seniors to visit and network with others in their area. These centers offer a safe environment for adults to engage in various recreational activities, while providing respite for caregivers. Caregivers tend to be generous, loving people who feel strong commitments to serving others. Nonpaid caregiving is the foundation of our entire senior support network. Caring for these caregivers is the best

way to ensure that this kind of care continues to be available.



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Dear Friend:

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Cooperative Extension office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians.

Please contact your local Cooperative Extension office for more information on these and related topics.

Learning *for* **Life**

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