

Diabetes and children



Years ago, diabetes in children was a rarity. Children were most likely to get type 1 diabetes. In fact, it was called juvenile diabetes.

But today, type 2 diabetes is affecting too many children in our country. About 208,000 young people in the U.S. under age 20 had diabetes in 2012.¹ The single biggest cause for this: extra weight. Currently, one in every three children is overweight. Once a child gets too heavy, he or she is twice as likely to get diabetes.²

How can you stop your child from becoming part of this epidemic?

- *Encourage children to eat healthy foods.* With the right guidance and consistency, they'll consider fruits "sweets" instead of candy.
- *Prepare healthy meals.* A healthy breakfast will help your child stay focused and active. If you send a lunch with your child, pack a meal that contains whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- *Replace high-fat foods with low-fat options,* such as low-fat turkey, reduced-fat cheese and skim milk. Include healthy snacks, such as fruit, nuts or easy to eat veggies, like baby carrots.
- *If your child buys meals at school, look at the cafeteria menus together to help them make healthy choices.* Many schools post their menus online, or you can request this information from school workers.
- *Make sure your child is active.* They should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- *Limit screen time – TV, video games, and the Internet – to 1 to 2 hours a day.* This will set the ground rules for a healthier lifestyle.
- *Be a role model for fitness.* Encourage your child by being active together – doing such things as walking the dog, riding bicycles or playing basketball – and you will get the health benefits too.
- *Be a role model for prevention.* Children need support from a healthy parent or guardian. So stay active, eat right and make diabetes prevention part of your own health plan.

Children with type 2 diabetes are at a higher risk for serious health complications, including:

- Blindness
- Kidney failure
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Loss of toes, feet or legs

Source:
 1 http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/ndep/living-with-diabetes/youth-teens/diabetes-children-adolescents/Documents/overview-of-diabetes-children-508_2014.pdf
 2 <http://www.cdc.gov/features/diabetesinschool/>