

5 Strategies to Prevent Summer Weight Gain in Children



Despite the warmer weather and more free time, the lazy days of summer can pose a risk for some children to gain weight according to a recent study by the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

More Food, Less Motion Add Up

The study found a decrease in eating fruits and vegetables and an increase in drinking more sugary drinks as the culprit during the summer months as well as poor weekend diets. It also found kids on school-assisted lunch programs are more susceptible than those who aren't.

“You might expect that bike rides, pool time, and fewer trips to the vending-machine line would slim students down over the summer,” says Allison Prior, MA, RD, LDN, Clinical Nutrition Manager, Norwood Hospital. “But a lack of a structured schedule, boredom and easy access to junk food may lead them to eat more calories instead.”

Meanwhile, without physical education classes, recess, or sports, kids often move less. Disrupted sleep schedules may also play a role in extra weight gain.

Steps to Keep Off Extra Pounds

If you're concerned about the extra unwanted pounds, follow these summer strategies to keep your whole family's weight in check:

1. **Schedule active time each day.** Bike, hike, swim, do outdoor chores or play in the park as a family. Choose times when you're already together, and everyone has a lot of energy—say, in the morning before the heat of the day.
2. **Provide toys that encourage movement.** Young kids may like balls and jump ropes
3. **Cut down on screen time.** It is important to limit TV, computer, and video game time to two hours per day.
4. **Increase your intake of fresh, seasonal produce.** At mealtimes, fill half of every plate with fruits and veggies.
5. **Keep everyone hydrated.** Supply plenty of low-fat milk and water instead of sugary juices and soda.

Norwood Hospital

A STEWARD FAMILY HOSPITAL

