

# eHouseCall

2007

A Monthly Electronic Newsletter from HealthLink

## Doctor's Bag



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Chief Medical Officer

### CHILDHOOD OBESITY IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM

Too many kids are getting too many calories and those calories are turning into extra fat. Childhood obesity takes a huge toll on children, their families and society at large. A study conducted in January 2007 by the University of Michigan Health System revealed that kids with weight problems are at risk for diabetes, asthma, gall bladder disease, liver disease, sleep apnea and high cholesterol – conditions formerly attributed to obese adults. The study also found that overweight and obese children were more likely to need certain surgeries than non-obese children, including “the removal of tonsils and adenoids, as well as other surgeries designed to assist with breathing problems and sleep apnea; orthopedic surgeries to fix broken bones and other ailments; and procedures designed to mend digestive and gastrointestinal issues.”

Rates of overweight and obesity in children have nearly tripled in the last two decades throughout the U.S. The University of Michigan study concludes that 60 to 70% of obese adolescents are likely to remain obese as adults.

If your child is overweight, any positive action you take now can make a lifelong difference. Ask your family doctor to help you set a regimen of nutrition and exercise for the whole family.

## HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

AUGUST

### BACK TO SCHOOL

#### What's in Your Child's Lunch Box?

While many school lunch programs are providing healthier options for students, the typical cafeteria meal is still higher in fat and calories than it should be. A packed lunch of nutritional foods that taste good is a great option for many students.



#### Think outside the lunch box

A bologna sandwich, chips, cookies and a juice pouch provide about half the maximum amount of fat an *adult* should eat in a day. Add the calories, sodium and sugar and your student just might be better off with cafeteria food. So what's a parent to do? Here are some lunch-packing tips from Margo Wootan, senior scientist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest:

#### In the sandwich

- ♦ Use whole grain bread. Look for the word “whole” in the ingredient list. “Multi-grain” or “wheat” don't necessarily mean whole grains.
- ♦ Leave out the cheese or use reduced fat cheese.
- ♦ Use low-fat lunch meat.
- ♦ Use low-fat mayo or non-fat alternatives like mustard, salsa or chutney.
- ♦ Add a vegetable to the sandwich – cucumber, sprouts, lettuce, tomato – even apple slices.

#### With the sandwich

- ♦ Encourage your child to choose 1% or skim milk.
- ♦ If you pack juice, make sure it's 100% juice. Read the label.
- ♦ Put fruit in the lunch box every day. Make it more appealing by cutting it up and wrapping it in plastic wrap.
- ♦ Ideally, leave the cookies out. Save the sweets for a special treat after school or after dinner.
- ♦ Instead of regular chips, pack baked chips, pretzels or low-fat crackers. And keep portions small.

## DidUKnow?

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, here are 10 of the worst and best foods/drinks for kids (think school lunches):

#### Ten of the Worst:

1. Soda pop
2. Whole milk
3. Hamburgers
4. Hot dogs
5. Bologna
6. American cheese
7. Pizza loaded with cheese & meat
8. French fries and tator tots
9. Candy bars
10. Ice cream

#### Ten of the Best:

1. Fresh fruit and vegetables (especially carrot sticks, cantaloupe, oranges, watermelon, strawberries)
2. Skim or 1% milk
3. Extra-lean ground beef
4. Low-fat hot dogs
5. Chicken breast or drumstick without skin or breading
6. Low fat cheese cubes
7. Fat-free corn or potato chips
8. Seasoned air-popped popcorn
9. Whole wheat crackers
10. Non-fat ice cream or non-fat frozen yogurt

#### Information Sources

Action Alliance for Children ([www.4children.org](http://www.4children.org))

Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action Newsletter: What Are We Feeding Our Kids?*

Kids Health ([www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org))

USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine ([www.bcm.edu](http://www.bcm.edu))

University of Michigan Health System Department of Public Relations and Marketing Communications *Newsroom* ([www.med.umich.edu/opm/newspage/2007/obesitysurgery.htm](http://www.med.umich.edu/opm/newspage/2007/obesitysurgery.htm))

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