

Make losing weight a family affair

March 7 2018, by Julie Davis, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Is your family struggling with overweight or obesity?

To lose weight, take a [team approach](#). Studies show that when

overweight parents shed pounds, so do their overweight kids.

Parents hold the keys to [positive behaviors](#) that encourage a [healthy weight](#), from doing the food shopping and cooking to getting kids involved in sports and other fitness activities.

Even if there's one family member who doesn't need to lose weight, everyone will enjoy better health by putting the focus on more nutritious eating and being active as a forever lifestyle, rather than just going on a temporary diet.

One of the most important changes you can make is cutting out all junk food, soda and even juice because it's high in [natural sugars](#). Switch to alternatives like milk and water. Have fruits and vegetables within reach for healthy snacks, and wean kids off greasy chips with whole grain crackers.

Next, rebalance the amount of time spent watching TV and spent exercising—limiting screen time helps kids lose weight. Be sure to turn off the TV during meals for more mindful eating.

Try this family weight-loss action plan:

- Set limits on portion sizes to curb calories.
- Eliminate sugary drinks.
- Limit TV and computer time to 2 hours a day.
- Increase fun family fitness activities.
- Celebrate health achievements with non-food rewards like going to the movies.

It's also worth repeating that when parents sit down with kids at the dinner table, kids eat healthier, and family relationships benefit from the social interaction.

Be sure to communicate these new behaviors to your extended family and all caregivers so they'll know to support your efforts.

More information: The Benioff Children's Hospital at the University of California, San Francisco has more advice and additional resources for [family weight loss success](#).

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