Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Five steps to a healthy weight and family

Maintaining a healthy weight throughout life, without resorting to dead-end fad diets, can be challenging. A growing number of Canadian adults appear to be losing the battle of the bulge and, as countless males and females become middle-aged, they will also be at risk to put on excess weight.



Alarmingly, obesity among children and youth in Canada is also reaching epic proportions. Recent studies have revealed that over the last 15 years, the obesity rate is up 50 per cent among six to 11 year-olds, and 40 per cent among 12 to 17-year-old adolescents.

As for our American neighbours, the current estimate is that one out of four American children is obese.

Healthy Living Starts at Home

The truth is, healthy living begins at home. Parents endorsing a healthy-weight lifestyle can make a difference for the entire family. Children will be more willing to join in when the whole family is committed to the pleasure of healthy eating and the fun of active living.

Consider the following five tips to get yourself and your family on the right track:

1. **Set priorities.** Make healthy weights and a healthy lifestyle a priority for you and your family. If you fall into a rut of bad eating and less-than frequent exercising, motivate each other to get back on track.
2. **Set the stage.** Create a healthy home environment, keeping it well stocked with tasty, nutritious food. Get rid of the junk food in your home, so that no one will be tempted to have an unhealthy binge. Consider posting healthy snack ideas on your fridge door.
3. **Plan your meals.** Eat a balanced breakfast every day and make dinner a family affair, as often as possible. Preplanning meals for the week will allow you to ensure that your family is consuming the right amount of nutrients with each meal.
4. **Keep it fresh.** Introduce new foods regularly and give a new twist to old favourites. Variety is key to eating well and the spice of life. Consider surfing the Internet for new recipe ideas, or purchase a cook book with recipes from a different style of cuisine.
5. **Get moving.** Wear a pedometer and challenge yourself to increase the number of steps you take in a day. Physical activity will make you feel better and burn calories from occasional treats. Keep active as a family by jogging together or joining a local sports league.

For more information and support on helping your family maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle, speak with a registered dietitian who can create a personalized plan for you.
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