Obesity is a growing health concern across the nation, especially with our nation’s children. Results from the 2003-2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), using measured heights and weights, indicate that an estimated 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2-19 years of age are overweight.

Taken directly from the National Center for Health statistics, “Childhood obesity involves significant physical and emotional health risks. In 2000, it was estimated that 30 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls born in the United States are at risk for being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives.”

Physical activity and proper nutrition are two key components to preventing and treating the disease of obesity. Physical activity can prevent or delay hypertension, prevent diabetes, increase bone density, decrease anxiety, improve body image and mood, improve scholastic performance in school, develop good physical fitness and promote weight control, just to name a few.

How Much Physical Activity is Enough?

The American College of Sports Medicine and Center for Disease Control recommend that adolescents and adults engage in 30 minutes or more a day of moderate intensity exercise most days of the week. It is recommended for children to engage in 60 minutes of moderate intensity exercise most days.

The Centers for Disease Control, the National Association for Sports and Physical Education and the American Heart Association all recommend a comprehensive daily physical education program for children K-12.
You can do something very informal.
It does not have to be sports or dance class.
Walk to the park, wash the car, nature walk/hike
and walk to the library or the store.
Get the whole family involved, even pets!

What are the Benefits of
Formal Physical Education?

• Develops motor skills
• Promotes physical fitness
• Increases energy expenditure
• Promotes positive attitudes
• Enhances academic performance
• Enhances good mental health and self concepts

What Can We as a Society, as Parents and Family
Members, as well as Educational Professionals Do?

1. Get yourself moving
   • Be a good role model for your kids/community.
   • Children of active parents are SIX times more
     likely to be active than kids whose parents are
     sedentary.
   • Make it a joint effort!

2. Shut off the television, video games and
   computers
   • Set guidelines.
   • More than 60 percent of childhood obesity is
     directly related to watching too much television.
   • The rate of obesity rises 2 percent
     for each hour of television
     watched a day.

3. Promote PE in school
   • When your child is registering,
     encourage them to take a physical
     education class.
   • If your child is in day care, make
     sure it offers at least 20 minutes of
     physical exercise/activity a day.

4. Promote activity rather than
   exercise
   • Sometimes when we call it
     “exercise,” it can have negative
     feelings or thoughts associated
     with it. Activity and movement
     are much less charged words.
   • Try free play activities such
     as: tag, hide and seek,
     hopscotch, jump rope,
     Simon says, capture the
     flag, etc.

5. Be supportive
   • Children of all ages need acceptance and
     encouragement.
   • Use positive reinforcement of the physical activities.
   • Be sensitive and find activities that are not difficult or
     that may cause embarrassment.
   • Add variety and let them choose.

A fun and interactive tool is on the My Pyramid Web site.
Visit the “For Kids” section at www.mypyramid.gov

Resources:
1. win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/child.htm
2. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5336a5.htm
3. www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines

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Did You Know?
• At least 75 percent of
  Americans live within a
  2-mile walking distance
  from a public park.

Where is your nearest park?
The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education
- Community Blogs
- Community Discussion Forum
- Ongoing Support
- Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE

JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

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