



How to talk to your child about weight

Talking to children about weight is hard, but important. Children should never be put on “diets” or made to lose weight unless told by your child’s doctor. Here are some ways to talk to your child about weight without hurting his/her feelings.

Bring it up Gently

Find a good time to bring up the topic. A good time may be right after a doctor checkup. You could start by saying:

“You heard the doctor say you were gaining weight too quickly” or

“Do you want to talk about what we can do to help?”

If your child wants to talk, choose 1 or 2 things you can start doing as soon as you get home. Offer ways to exercise as a family, such as walks, bike rides, or more time at the playground. You can also pick a food item you want to eat less of. For example sodas or chips.



Keep it Kid-Friendly

It can be hard for young children to understand what problems can come with being overweight as they become adults. Find what motivates your child. It may be they want to feel better, keep up

with their friends, have clothes fit them better.

For example, “If you eat lots of fruit and vegetables and play outside more, you’ll be able to run around the bases without getting tired”.



Walk the Talk



Set a good example for your child. For some children, seeing their parents make healthy choices, can encourage them to do the same.

Talk to your child about how much you enjoy going for walks or riding your bike. Also, mention how eating healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables, can make you feel good and give you more energy. If your child hears how exercise and healthy food are important to you, he/she will want to be more active and eat better too.

Play up the Positives

Many overweight children do not feel good about themselves.

- Never tease a child about his/her weight.
- Be understanding and listen to them when they talk about their weight.
- Remind your child that you love him/her regardless of their size.
- Find creative ways to boost your child's self esteem.
- Focus on things like your child's beautiful smile and how much fun they are to be around. Tell your child you are proud of the changes he/she is making, like eating more fruit.



Never Say Diet

Children are supposed to gain weight as they grow. Putting them on a “diet” or weighing them on a scale every week can be harmful. Even young children who are overweight can easily become obsessed with losing weight. Instead, the focus should be on encouraging your child to get more exercise and eat better. Follow these tips to help your child feel good about his/her body:



Show respect for your own body

If your daughter hears you say things like “My hips are so big” or “I feel fat”, she will become more focused on her own looks. Instead, show her that you are happy with who you are and you aren’t focused on your looks.

Praise the effort, not the results

Don’t talk about how great your child is looking. Instead, say things that encourage them to continue their new healthy behaviors. For example, “Isn’t it fun to work up a sweat playing soccer?”

Don’t compare

Your child already has to deal with peer pressure. Do not add to it by commenting on how great another child looks. Remember the goal is to teach your child healthy habits, not to reach a certain number on the scale.

