

## Healthy Weight

# INITIATIVE

NEWSLETTER

## CHILDHOOD OBESITY: BREAKING THE CYCLE

The expanding waistlines of Americans have been a hot topic for the past ten years. Lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating patterns are thought to be the main causes of this epidemic. Unfortunately, our children are learning these same poor lifestyle habits and following in our footsteps and becoming overweight and obese.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there has been a 30% increase in obesity rates among children since 1980. Approximately 23 million children and teens are now considered overweight or obese. These extra pounds carry serious health risks. Overweight children and teens have an increased risk for developing high cholesterol, high blood pressure, asthma, joint problems, depression and Type 2 Diabetes. In fact, teens that are overweight have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This number increases to 80% if they have just one overweight or obese parent.

Don't be discouraged. There is good news. We can do something to reverse this trend. Here are 5 simple tips:

1. Serve more fruit and vegetables. Include fruits and vegetables in each meal and serve them as snacks. They are packed with the fiber, vitamins and minerals that young bodies need. They are also lower in calories and sodium than the usual snack foods.
2. Limit the intake of sweet beverages. Fruit drinks and sodas tend to be high in calories and low in nutrients. Substituting water or diet drinks for these beverages will cut unnecessary calories. 100% fruit juice, in limited amounts, is also a good choice.
3. Eat meals as a family. Families who eat meals together tend to eat slower. This allows for awareness of how

- much is eaten and how full you feel. It also gives families a chance to catch up on the family news of the day.
4. Encourage more activity. Participating in activities that get them moving is a great way for children to burn calories. This doesn't need to be an organized exercise program. Free play, skipping rope, dancing, and hop-scotch are all great ways to get moving.
5. Set a good example. Let your children see you adopting healthier lifestyle habits and they will follow in your footsteps into a happier healthier life.

Since September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, it's a good time to begin implementing these tips into your daily life. For more information please visit <http://childhoodobesitynews.com/>.



## BACK TO SCHOOL WITH ASTHMA

It's that time of year when parents feverishly shop for school supplies and the latest fall fashions while students are filled with anxiety and excitement as they prepare for a new school year. However, students with asthma and their parents face even bigger challenges that should be addressed before the school year starts. It is important to prepare and carefully monitor a detailed action plan to manage asthma to ease the

transition to being in the classroom. Asthma affects an estimated seven million children younger than 18 and it accounts for more than 14 million lost school days every year.

Here is a back-to-school checklist for asthmatic students and their parents:

1. Develop an Asthma Action Plan
2. Schedule Asthma Check-up Doctor's Appointment
3. Vaccinate Yourself and Your Child Against Seasonal Influenza

4. Visit Your Child's School Nurse and Teachers
5. Know Your School's Asthma Emergency Plan
6. Know About Prescription Assistance Services

If you have any questions or would like further information about the Alabama Asthma Program please go to [www.adph.org/asthma](http://www.adph.org/asthma) or call Melissa Dean at 334-206-5504 or Michelle Dickey at 334-206-7001.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO ADDRESS BULLYING

Did you know that over half of students have personally witnessed some type of bullying at school? And usually the bullying does not stop at the end of the school day. Bullying disrupts the learning setting and negatively affects the atmosphere of school and after-school programs.

Bullying comes in many forms:

**Verbal bullying** is teasing, name calling or making verbal threats.

**Physical bullying** includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person like hitting, punching or kicking.

**Social alienation** is when a bully excludes a person from activities and conversations on purpose. It also includes spreading rumors and making fun of someone by pointing out their differences.

**Cyber bullying** uses things like the internet and cell phones to send messages, pictures or information to make verbal threats; and threatening, insulting or embarrassing emails and texts. Cyber bullying is quickly growing because of the spread of technology.

**Intimidation** is when a bully frightens or threatens another person enough to make him or her do what the bully wants.

All forms of bullying should always be taken seriously. It should not be seen as "kids just being kids". Make sure that children know that bullying will not be tolerated and that program staff and parents will work with them to stop the bullying. Always encourage children to talk about and report bullying and when they do, listen carefully. Talking about bullying can be hard and children may be afraid to share their concerns.

It takes after-school program staff, parents and students working together to create a place where everyone feels they belong and are safe.



## SADDLE UP PARTNER AND HOP ON YOUR BICYCLE. SPONSOR A BIKE RODEO!

A Bike Rodeo is an opportunity to educate parents and children about the safety aspects of riding a bicycle from their backyard to on the streets. Activities included in the rodeo are a helmet fitting, bicycle obstacle course, safety lecture on the rules of the road, and a bike tune up.

It is a great way to teach children and their parents about the importance of being safe while riding a bike and having fun. If you are interested in having a rodeo, please contact Adrinda Carter at [adrinda.carter@adph.state.al.us](mailto:adrinda.carter@adph.state.al.us) or 334-206-5137.





# EATING HEALTHY ON-THE-GO

With kids back at school, and sports and activities taking up evening time, it can be hard to find the time to prepare and cook three meals a day for your family. Resist the temptation to go through the drive-through or only buy pre-packaged convenience foods! With just a few simple ingredients you can make healthy meals that are easy to prepare - even on-the-go.

Here are some ideas on how to make healthy meals with limited preparation time:

## Breakfast

- **Oatmeal** - The night before, fill a small 8 oz. mason jar with oats, nuts, dried fruit and a touch of brown sugar and salt; cover with lid. Simply empty contents into a mug or bowl and add hot water for a quick breakfast. (Note: This always looks so pretty stored in the jar, you might be tempted to keep one out for decoration!)
- **Yogurt with Granola** - Single yogurt cups are a perfect breakfast item to take with you on-the-go. Simply top with fresh fruit or crunchy granola, and you've got a satisfying breakfast.
- **Smoothies** - Think out of the box with smoothies for a filling breakfast. Flavors like sweet potato and strawberry, blueberry and peach, banana and peanut butter will really wake up your taste buds. Blend ingredients with milk and ice - and enjoy!

## Lunch

- **Pasta Salad** - This simple formula always adds up to great pasta salad. Combine any of the following ingredients:
  - Pasta (any shaped, including tortellini)
  - Cheese (i.e. parmesan, feta)
  - Vegetables (i.e. tomatoes, bell peppers)
  - Meats (chicken works very well)Toss all ingredients with a little olive oil or mayonnaise, and season with salt and pepper.
- **Cheese with Crackers** - Sliced cheese is very versatile. Slice a bar of cheese into small 1 inch by 1/4 inch pieces and pair with crackers and veggie sticks.
- **Soups** - Soups store and travel well in a hot thermos. Bring anything from chicken noodle to homemade tomato along for a lunch, and you'll feel full and eat well.

## Dinner

- **Chicken and Ground Beef** - Cook several pounds of meat at one time, and use to make meals throughout the week. Chicken makes great hot sandwiches or chicken tenders. Ground beef can be used to make sloppy joes, tacos or burritos.
- **Chicken Sausage** - Chicken sausages are one of the most versatile foods you can find. They can be cooked ahead of time and store well in the refrigerator for a few days. Eat them whole in rolls, topped with salsa or mustard.
- **Homemade pizza** - Pizza made with fresh dough and topped with low-fat cheese tastes great - and cooks fast. Make pizza one night and save leftovers for another day. (You may have to put the extra slices under lock and key - they'll disappear quickly!)

By having a few, simple ingredients on hand you can make healthy meals quickly and easily for your family.

*For more meal-making ideas and recipes, visit [www.once-upon-a-coupon.com](http://www.once-upon-a-coupon.com).*



# BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY

The 2011-2012 school year is here!!! Parents and students alike are all excited about moving on to new grade levels and schools, new teachers and classrooms, and most importantly for the students, new friends. With these great new adventures come concerns about the safety of our youth. Three areas of increasing concern are road traffic injuries, sports injuries, and falls. According to recent reports by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) every hour, 150 children between ages 0 and 19 are treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained in motor vehicle crashes, more than half of the 7 million sports and recreation-related injuries that occur each year are sustained by youth between ages 5 and 24, and falls are the leading cause of non-fatal injuries for all children ages 0 to 19.



Take these suggested precautions to ensure a safe school year.

## Falls

- Check to make sure playground equipment your child uses is properly designed and maintained and there's a safe, soft landing surface below.
- Use home safety devices, such as guards on windows, stair gates, and guard rails.

## Car Passenger Safety

- All car occupants should be safely secured in a seatbelt or with a child safety seat.
- All children ages 12 and under should be seated in the back seat of vehicles.
- Be sure to follow all requirements of Alabama's Graduated Driver License (GDL) program. Contact the Department of Public Safety to learn more about the GDL.

## School Bus Safety

- While waiting for the bus, children should take five giant steps back from the curb until the bus has stopped completely.
- Remind children to stay seated at all times and keep head, arms and hands inside the bus.
- Be careful that clothing, book bags, and key rings don't get caught in the handrails or doors.
- When getting off the bus, children should walk to the closest sidewalk or side of the road and take five giant steps away from the bus.
- If something is dropped near the bus, the bus driver should be alerted so that the child can be seen when picking up the dropped item.

## Prevention Tips

- Children should wear protective gear when playing ALL sports. Gear includes mouth and wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, and a helmet when skating or biking.
- Sports protective equipment should be correctly maintained and in good condition.
- Children should wear bike helmets any time they are on a bicycle.
- Children should learn and practice skill sets relevant to their chosen activity; proper biomechanics, or movement and alignment, plays a role in preventing injuries during many activities.
- Allow time for child athletes to gradually adjust to hot or humid environments to prevent heat-related injuries or illness. Ensure players are hydrated and appropriately dressed.

For more injury prevention information visit: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and [www.adph.org/injuryprevention](http://www.adph.org/injuryprevention)



**Healthy Weight Initiative**  
**Alabama Department of Public Health**  
**The RSA Tower**  
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# NEWS AND EVENTS

## FRUITS AND VEGGIES—MORE MATTERS MONTH

**Making It Simple: The Half-Your-Plate Concept**  
What does a serving of broccoli look like? How many baby carrots are in a cup? Even the most well-versed nutrition professionals don't have all these measurements memorized! So let's make it easier: fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables at each meal or eating occasion. The new healthy MyPlate icon developed by the USDA supports this concept.

Promote eating more fruits and vegetables in September and all year long. Visit [www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org) for more information.

*When: September 2011*  
*Where: Nationwide*

## WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

Communities are using the walk or bike to school day as the first step to change community culture and create environments that are more inviting for everyone, young and old. Here are some reasons to support walking and biking to school:  
To enhance the health of kids - Increased physical activity can combat a host of health problems facing kids today.  
To improve air quality and the environment - Replacing car trips to school with walking or bicycling can help reduce air pollution.  
To create safer routes for walking and bicycling - Sidewalks, education programs and traffic calming measures are some of the ways to improve conditions.  
Visit [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org) for more information.

*When: October 5, 2011*  
*Where: Nationwide*

## NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH 2011

It's not too late for our children. The first-ever National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in September 2010 drew important public attention to the issues surrounding childhood obesity and made an impact in reducing the prevalence of the epidemic. This year, even more is being done to spread the word to communities throughout the U.S. and encourage children to be active and eat healthy.

We can't do it without you. Please join us by involving your community and spreading the word. Visit [www.healthierkidsbrighterfutures.org](http://www.healthierkidsbrighterfutures.org) for more information.

*When: September 2011*  
*Where: Nationwide*

## OBESITY TASK FORCE

Attend the state obesity task force meeting to network with partners from across the state who are working on obesity issues in adults and youth. Hear about programs and strategies that create healthier lifestyles and environments. Task force meetings are open to the public.

*When: November 16, 2011*  
*Where: Alabama Power Company, Clanton*  
*What time: 9:00am until noon*