

Healthy Children

BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF GOOD HEALTH



As parents, we want the best for our children, especially when it comes to protecting their health. It is never too early to work on preventing heart or lung disease, diabetes and cancer from ever affecting your child.

KEY STRATEGIES TO GET STARTED

1. **Be a role model.** Eat healthy foods with your children and try new foods together. Focus on being and feeling healthy as a family instead of talking about weight, which can harm self-esteem. If you use tobacco, quit with the help of your doctor or 802Quits. Don't use tobacco in front of your children and share the reason why.
2. **Offer your children a healthy diet.** Try a variety of fruits and vegetables. It can take several tries of a new food before they start to enjoy it. Offer sample sizes for small tastes. Don't give up!
3. **Provide only milk, water and 100% juice at snack and meal times.** Keeping sugary drinks away from kids prevents filling up on empty calories, reduces cavities, and builds healthy habits for the future.
4. **Help your child get at least an hour of physical activity a day.** Ride bikes together, play in the snow, put music on and dance. Encourage participation in recreational sports.
5. **Be clear with your children that tobacco use is not allowed.** As they get older, they need that consistent message from you to counter the marketing and peer influences on preteens and teens.
6. **Limit screen time.** Children over the age of two should have no more than two hours a day in front of a TV, computer, tablet or smart phone, in addition to school work. Keep electronics in the kitchen or living room where their use can be monitored.

START HEALTHY HABITS EARLY

Childhood obesity can lead to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, asthma and social discrimination. Helping children learn healthy habits early will help them become healthy adults.

Ninety percent of adult tobacco users started using before the age of 18, which increases likelihood of cancer, respiratory and heart disease. Youth exposure to nicotine acts as a neurotoxin and increases addiction risk as an adult. Youth tobacco use has been decreasing due to efforts to limit tobacco promotion, access and price discounts.

"I want to teach my kids healthy behaviors to be active, confident and healthy. I am setting an example for them."

MORE RESOURCES

healthvermont.gov/wellness/physical-activity-nutrition/individuals-and-families

healthyinasnapvt.org

counterbalancevt.com