

Talking to Your Child About Weight and Healthy Habits

This *Health Fact for You* shares tips on how to speak to your child about their weight and health. Talking to your child should be positive. Talk about habits that lead to a healthy life instead of focusing on weight.

Healthy Habits

Encourage eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking less soda or juice, and not skipping breakfast. It's about balance, not dieting. No food needs to be avoided unless a doctor says so. Focus on doing things that are healthy, like being active and getting plenty of sleep.

Be Careful with Your Words

Avoid using words like “fat” or “bad,” which can make someone feel ashamed. Don’t make assumptions about people with bigger bodies. Don’t call them “lazy” or “dumb.” This can shape the way others feel about themselves and create bad ideas.

Watch What You Say About Your Body

Be careful when talking about your own body. Don’t speak negative about yourself, like “I feel fat today.” Your child might think the same way about their body. Show love for your body. Talk about what it can do, not just how it looks.

Make It a Family Effort

Set a good example. Create a home life where healthy habits are encouraged. Eat healthier food and stay active. Your child will be more likely to do the same.

Avoid Saying “You Should”

Don’t pressure your child. Saying “You shouldn’t eat that” or “You should eat healthier” can make them resist. Suggest healthier options when the time is right. Do it in a kind, positive way.

Build Confidence in Other Ways

Help your child see that they are valuable for things like being a good friend, helping others, or doing well in school. Praise your child for things like being kind or never giving up.

Talk About Health in Everyday Moments

Talk about food, activity, and health daily. You can talk about making healthy choices whether you’re cooking, shopping, or watching TV.

If your child says something about body size, calmly remind them that health and self-care are what really matter.

Focus on Health, Not Just Weight

Instead of only talking about losing weight, talk about feeling good and staying healthy. Make these talks a normal part of daily life, so making healthy choices feels natural.

By making small, positive changes and creating a supportive home, you can help your child grow up with a healthy attitude about food and their body.