

SEPTEMBER 2021

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

Nearly 20% of American youth (13.7 million children) between the ages of 2 and 19 are considered obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As a result, public health officials have declared childhood obesity a national epidemic.

That's because overweight children are at a much greater risk for health problems now and in the future than children who are within a healthy weight range. And pretending the issue doesn't exist only hurts children more. In fact, the longer a child remains overweight, the greater their risk for developing serious long-term health problems, such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Fortunately, childhood obesity can be prevented and reduced through healthy eating and regular physical activity. Prevention is easier and more effective when parents promote healthy eating and exercise habits at an early age, and incorporate them into their family's lifestyle. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease.

Take Action

Awareness only goes so far toward improving your health—you also need to take action. Use this section to track your weekly progress as you establish your healthier lifestyle.

Week 1 (8/29-9/4) – **Create a wellness plan**

What do you want to improve this month? Set a short-term health goal and a plan for achieving it.

Week 2 (9/5-9/11) – **Get started**

Are you ready? Begin your plan and stick to it.

Week 3 (9/12-9/18) – **Look for improvement**

How are you doing? Think about what's working with your plan and if you need to adjust it.

Week 4 (9/19-9/25) – **Keep going**

Are the adjustments helping? Continue with your revised plan and finish the month strong.

Week 5 (9/26-10/2) – **Reflect**

Did you reach your goal? Consider what worked with the plan and what should change next month.