

# ELEMENT FITNESS

## Do Your Kids Exercise?

A recent study from the University of Washington showed that more and more 2-year olds are regularly watching television. This sets the stage for a sedentary life with an increased risk for obesity and heart disease.

Now that last statement wasn't from the study - that was our own prediction.

But really, the statistics don't lie – a study done at Johns Hopkins concluded that a child's weight increases with the number of hours they spend in front of the television each day.

Are you cringing yet? What parent hasn't popped in a DVD to occupy the kids for a few hours?

And what about your child's diet? How often do you find yourself in the drive thru line ordering another cheeseburger and fries?

Childhood obesity is now described as an epidemic. It puts your child's health at risk, and makes them more susceptible to problems involving their cardiovascular systems, endocrine systems, and even their mental health. Type 2 diabetes mellitus, depression, and low self-esteem are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the problems looming over the heads of overweight children.

We're not telling you anything that you don't already know. It doesn't take a study done at Johns Hopkins to discover that kids today are putting on weight in ways that we never did - you just have to open your eyes to notice.

The 'why' is simple. It goes back to the basic equation for weight gain: energy in versus energy out. Kids eat too much and do too little.

But we have to ask... are you setting a good example by your eating habits? This may be a painful question to want to answer – but the truth sometimes hurts (and is good for us).

Maybe you've noticed that your child has begun to put on a little extra weight - what do you do about it? No matter what age your child is - weight is a sensitive issue.

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### **What do your kids eat?**

Think about your child's diet. Do they eat three balanced meals a day? Do they eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day? Are they limited in their servings of fried, processed, and sugary foods?

Maybe you aren't sure what your kids are eating. Do some investigation by observing and talking to them about what they eat.

Identify the foods your kids are eating that are rich in calories but lacking in nutritional value. Examples: candy, fast food, chips, cookies, soda pop, and pizza. Replace these foods with fresh nutrient dense foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meats and low fat dairy.

### **How much activity do your kids get?**

Computers, video games, and satellite T.V. are our children's latest and greatest toys. Who has time to play outside when you are about to beat the hardest level, or your favorite show is about to start? Our kids participate in less physical activity and are more sedentary than any generation before.

Do you know how much physical activity your kids get each day? Some parents may think that kids are getting an hour of P.E. each day, only to find out that the school has dropped its P.E. classes.

A great way to encourage activity is to limit the time your children spend on sedentary activities, such as T.V and video games. Sign your kids up on a local sports team so that they can run and be active with other kids. Take the whole family to the park on a weekend instead of gathering in front of the T.V.

### **Monkey see monkey do**

This issue really boils down to one factor: Parental Example. Your kids watch what you do even when you wish they wouldn't, and this is certainly true when it comes to diet and exercise.

Do you model good eating habits, or do your kids see you indulge? Do you exercise regularly, or do your kids see you on the couch in front of the television all weekend?

As a parent, it is your unique responsibility to teach your children the habits that lead to good health. Since you know that obese children have a greater chance of remaining obese into adulthood, thus greatly increasing the likelihood of serious health problems, this isn't a responsibility that you take lightly.

If your eating habits and activity level have slipped it may be time for you to turn things around. It's never too late to set a positive example for your kids – the key is to act now.

Contact us today to get started on a program that will transform your body and renew your lifestyle. There's nothing better for motivation than dropping a few sizes!

So you're ready to start a healthy diet. The first time you bite into a protein bar instead of a cookie your taste buds may protest, but hang on! Give yourself time to adjust to your new healthy lifestyle and the new foods that you will discover. It won't take long for your taste buds to adjust and for your waist to shrink.

## Turkey Spaghetti Sauce



This spaghetti sauce is delicious and packed with protein.

For an even healthier option, serve the sauce over cooked spaghetti squash or steamed broccoli.

**Servings: 6**

### Here's what you need...

- 1 pound uncooked turkey tenderloin, cubed**
- 1 medium green pepper, cut into 3/4-in. pieces**
- 1 medium onion, cut into wedges**
- 2/3 cup sliced fresh mushrooms**
- 1 tablespoon canola oil**
- 1 jar (15-1/2 ounces) meatless spaghetti sauce**
- 1 cup sliced turkey pepperoni, halved**
- 1/2 cup dry red wine or chicken broth**
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste**
- 10 ounces uncooked vermicelli**

1. In a Dutch oven or large kettle, sauté the turkey, green peppers, onion and mushrooms in oil until vegetables are tender. Stir in spaghetti sauce, pepperoni, wine or broth and tomato paste. Bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 45 minutes. Uncover; simmer 15 – 20 minutes longer or until thickened. Meanwhile, cook vermicelli according to package directions; drain. Serve with sauce.

**Nutritional Analysis:** One serving equals: 321 calories, 5g fat, 40g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, and 28g protein.

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