



Bradford Tioga Head Start Inc.

Fighting Childhood Obesity in the Home

Childhood obesity has become a major problem in the United States. Many genetic factors may cause children to become overweight, but parents can help fight childhood obesity in their home.

Portion Sizes. Serve children small portions and let them ask for seconds. Children don't need to finish everything on their plate. Just like adults, children have times when they aren't hungry. Parents are responsible for serving healthful food to children. Children are responsible for deciding how much and whether to eat.

Spacing of Meals. Offer food at regular times: breakfast, lunch, dinner and several snack times, if needed. It's not wise to delay eating until a child is starved. Studies show that hungry children prefer high calories that are filling and quickly satisfying. Sometimes children eat very little at a meal. Offering balanced meals and snacks at regular intervals, allows a child to decide when and how much to eat.

Healthful Food Choices. Children are influenced by TV ads for sweet

and high-fat foods, so parents must be careful not to let their children influence their buying habits. Buy low-fat snack foods such as fruit, popcorn, pretzels and graham crackers; instead of potato chips, soda and cookies. Offer water and low-fat milk. (Children under the age of two need whole-fat dairy products for brain development.) Allow sugar-coated cereals only on special occasions. Avoid soft drinks; there is a link between the amount of soft drinks consumed and obesity.



Fruit Juice. 100 percent fruit juice can be a healthful part of a well-balanced plan. But too much juice can replace other healthful foods (such as milk) and contribute to obesity. During an infant's first six months, breast milk (or formula) is all that is needed. Limit juice to no more than four ounces a day for infants six to 12 months old, and six ounces a day between the ages of one and six. Fresh fruit is best because it provides nutrients, fiber and fewer calories. If your child already drinks too much juice, cut back slowly. Offer plain water instead.

Lowfat Chicken Casserole



What You Need:

- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3/4 cup skim evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup low-fat, low-salt chicken broth
- 1-1/2 cups cooked rice
- 1-1/2 cups diced cooked chicken
- 1/3 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1/3 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped canned pimento

How To Fix:

1. Melt margarine in small saucepan. Blend in flour to make a paste.
2. Add milk, broth and 1/2 cup water. Cook and stir until mixture is thickened and bubbly.
3. Add rice, chicken, mushrooms, green pepper and pimento. Pour into greased casserole. Bake 40 minutes at 350° F. Serves 6. (192 calories and 8 grams fat per serving.)

Dot-to-Dot Food Pictures

Children love to connect numbered dots to make a picture. Dot-to-dot food pictures can help children learn what foods look like as they learn and practice their numbers. It's also a great way to introduce new foods to children.

For this project you will need a design for each food (or just draw food free hand), paper, pencils and crayons. With a pencil, lightly draw a food item such as a carrot. Place dots along the lines and number the

dots one to 10 in order. Use higher numbers for school-aged children. Erase the pencil lines between numbers. If you have access to a copy machine, copy the dot-to-dot picture. Let children connect the dots and color the foods. Try to serve at least one of the foods for a snack or meal the same day.



An Infant's First Few Weeks

Many changes occur in the first two weeks of an infant's life:

- **Skin.** A newborn's circulation is not mature, so bluish hands and feet may occur—especially after sleeping. A pink color returns when baby moves. The skin on a baby's palms and soles often peel in the first two weeks after birth.
- **Eyes.** Swollen, puffy eyes are usually a result of pressure during birth. A yellow crust on the lids and lashes is also common. Consult a health care

provider if this condition lasts more than a few days.

- **Breasts.** Swollen breasts in babies of both sexes are normal. The swelling is a result of a hormone in the mother and will go down in a few days.
- **Mouth.** Sucking blisters on the upper lip are normal and usually go away between feedings. Newborns' often have white tongues from milk. Call a health care provider if white patches appear on the tongue. An infection may be present.

Crib Toys

Crib toys, and other items strung from mobiles or stretched across the crib, may be deadly to babies once they can raise themselves on their hands and knees. Babies can get their heads entangled in strings, straps or toy parts and not be able to get loose.

Companies that make crib toys warn parents to remove the toys when babies are five months old or can raise up on their hands and knees. Crib toys need to be removed **before** a baby reaches this stage to prevent injuries.



Constipation

Constipation is the passage of dry, hard stools, or no passage of a stool for a long period of time. Everyone has a different schedule for bowel movements. Some people go daily and some every few days. It's important to know what is normal for a person before diagnosing constipation.



It's normal for fluid to be drawn out of feces when it reaches the large intestine. If feces move too slowly through the intestine, the stool becomes hard and difficult to pass. Common causes of slow movement are poor bowel habits, not enough fluid or fiber in the diet, and lack of exercise. Some drugs also can cause constipation.

To help avoid constipation:

- Eat more raw fruits and vegetables, whole-wheat bread and dried beans.
- Increase exercise.
- Drink lots of water.
- Try to set a regular time to have a bowel movement. Children may need to be reminded; they often get busy with play and ignore the reflex to go.
- Avoid laxatives and enemas.