



TARGET TIPS



METABOLISM MATTERS

Don't just talk. Do something! Studies show that children who watch an excessive amount of tv are more at risk for becoming obese because their resting energy expenditures are lower than if they were doing nothing at all. So turn off televisions, video games and computers. Look for ways to spend fun, active time together.

Talking to Kids about Weight

Weight can be an extraordinarily sensitive subject for children and teens. Deciding how to approach weight issues with young people deserves careful attention. Here are some tips for discussing weight with kids:

Don't Play the Blame Game: Never bribe, threaten or punish children about weight, food, or physical activity. If you turn these issues into parent-child battlegrounds, the results can be disastrous. Shame, blame and anger are setups for failure. The worse children feel about their weight, the more likely they are to overeat or develop an eating disorder.

A United Front: As with any other important issue, make sure both parents and other important relatives are on the same page. Mixed messages about weight can have unhealthy consequences.

Seek Advice: Consult with your pediatrician about expected growth patterns. Then, if necessary, check out local programs and professionals who specialize in youth. Look for a registered dietitian with a specialty in pediatric weight management, or a hospital or clinic based program that targets kids. Some of these options may be covered by your health insurance plan.

Focus On the Big Picture: The key is health, not weight. If your family starts eating better and moving more, your children may "grow into" their weight as their height increases. Compliment your children on lifestyle behaviors ("Great snack choice," or "You really run fast") rather than on the loss of a pound or two.

What To Do If Your Child Says "I'm Fat" First of all, don't dismiss or dispute the child's statement. Put them in front of a mirror and have them describe what they see. Help them learn to love their body. Teach them what fat is: extra energy, warmth, protection for our insides. Teach them all the things we do to take care of the body we love, like feed it healthy food. Identify if their thoughts came from teasing or bullying that needs to be addressed.