

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT FOR KIDS AND TEENS

What you need to know

Why it's important to grow up healthy

It's no secret that, in order to grow up healthy, children need vitamins and nutrients from a healthy, balanced diet. Beyond the physical benefits, a child who eats a healthy diet gets a practical understanding of how food should aid their daily function, instead of filling a craving.

How to know if your child needs help managing their weight

Unlike how it's measured for adults, obesity in children is measured by comparing their body mass index to children who are the same age and sex. Your child's doctor will be able to determine if your child is overweight and help you find an action plan that's specific to their health, if necessary.



Set them up for adulthood

The CDC reports that nearly one in five children are obese.* The good news is you can help manage their weight solely with lifestyle changes at home.

Your child's health now greatly affects their health later in life. Children who are overweight are more likely to be overweight in adulthood. Plus, they have a higher risk of developing long-term conditions. Being overweight can also impact children's mental health, potentially contributing to lower confidence, anxiety and, sometimes, depression.

Give your child a healthy plate



An estimated 1 in 1,000 American children eats a healthy diet**

Eating a balanced diet will help children maintain a healthy weight and get the nutrients they need to grow up. Their diet should include plenty of:



Fruits and vegetables



Fiber



Whole grains



Healthy fats

Try to limit their intake of sugary beverages, like soda, sports drinks and fruit juice. These drinks aren't very nutritious and are packed with sugar. Instead, serve water, milk or diluted fruit juice to keep them happy and hydrated.

Small lifestyle changes with big effects

- **Make sure they get plenty of exercise** – Experts recommend children get between 150 and 300 minutes of moderately intense physical activity every week.
- **Eat together at the table** – Eating together encourages more mindful eating compared to eating in front of a TV or while on their phone.
- **Don't say "clean your plate"** – Teaching them to finish when they feel full helps them know when to stop eating.
- **Help them catch zzz's** – A lack of sleep or restless sleep increases levels of ghrelin, a hormone responsible for feeling hungry.
- **Teach them how to manage stress** – Some people turn to food to comfort them when they're stressed.
- **Practice positive messaging** – Instead of being critical about what your child does wrong, encourage them for the things they do right.



Nutritional counseling via Teladoc®

A registered dietician can help evaluate your child's nutritional needs and develop personalized diet meal plans from wherever they're most comfortable. These visits are covered in full for all Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan members.¹ Visit fepblue.org/telehealth to find out more.



Looking for more tips?

Our Healthy Families page provides resources and guidance for your family to live a healthier life, including articles, recipes and more tools to help you foster your child's well-being. Learn more at fepblue.org/healthyfamilies.

We can help support your family's health

Visit fepblue.org/weight-loss to learn more about the tools and benefits Service Benefit Plan members get to help you and your family maintain a healthy weight.

*Source: cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html

**Source: nutritionfacts.org/topics/obesity/

¹Nutritional counseling is available in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. These are limited to individual sessions; we do not provide benefits for group counseling.

Any information or materials included here is not meant to replace the advice of your doctor or health care professional.

This is a summary of the features of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Service Benefit Plan. Before making a final decision, please read the Plan's Federal brochures (FEP Blue Standard and FEP Blue Basic: RI 71-005; FEP Blue Focus: RI 71-017). All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations and exclusions set forth in the Federal brochures.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is an association of independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies.

The Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® words and symbols, Federal Employee Program® and FEP® are all trademarks owned by Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.