

# Battling Childhood Obesity at Home

## When does simple baby fat

become a more serious problem? Childhood obesity is a real threat—one in five American children is obese. Fortunately, board certified pediatrician Henry Collins, M.D., of Solano Regional Medical Group (SRMG), the multispecialty physician group affiliated with Sutter Regional Medical Foundation, says there's a solution. The solution starts at home.

## Set an Example Early On

Children who are obese are at risk for diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and poor self-esteem. In his 17 years of practicing pediatrics, Dr. Collins has noticed a jump in the number of children who are 50 to 100 pounds overweight. "Obesity is a big deal and a nationwide epidemic. You can't go out in public without being surrounded by Big Gulps and bags of chips."

But you can motivate your children to exercise and eat healthier—the key to establishing and maintaining a healthy weight—by showing them how it's done.

"One of the most important things you can do for a child is to be a role model. Parents need to reflect on the fact that what they do early on will be passed on to their kids. The habits children establish in the first five years determine how much they eat, how active they are, how they spend their spare time, their level of creativity, whether they brush their teeth on a regular basis and more," says Dr. Collins.

"Kids are likely to continue what their parents do. If children don't start out with good habits when they're young, healthy habits aren't going to find them."

## Seven Easy Snack Ideas

Making healthy food choices for the family falls on all parents' shoulders. Children notice the choices you make and follow your example. Forget about the "clean plate club," says Dr. Collins. Quick packaged snacks and sugary



## Keep Your Child on a Healthy Track

If you would like to make an appointment with one of our skilled pediatricians or want more information about our wide range of health care services, call **707-427-4900** or visit [srmf.org](http://srmf.org).



Henry Collins, M.D., pediatrician

foods have no dietary value. Keep fruit and vegetables available as snack choices in the kitchen. Healthy and kid-friendly snack ideas include:

- String cheese
- Whole wheat crackers and peanut butter
- Air-popped or low-fat microwave popcorn
- Frozen juice bars made with 100 percent real fruit
- Fresh and dried fruit
- Baby carrots with hummus or bean dip
- Low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit

You and your kids can change those obesity statistics and your own life with a healthy diet and active lifestyle.

## Let Sutter Health Help You

It's also important to talk with your child's doctor. SRMG pediatricians can discuss your children's health care needs in a comfortable, thorough way. Sutter Health offers helpful information at [kids.sutterhealth.org](http://kids.sutterhealth.org), including an interactive tool for calculating your child's body mass index.