



Nutrition & Activity Tip Sheet

Center on Media and Child Health

How does media use relate to what children eat and how they move?

To grow up healthy and strong, children's bodies need high-quality foods and a lot of exercise. Some media messages and some types of media use can interfere with these basic needs, but there are ways of reducing the negative effects and maximizing the positives.

How can media affect nutrition?

They affect what children want. Food advertising affects what foods kids ask for, and it is almost always selling products that are full of sugar, salt, and fat.

They affect how children eat. When kids eat while watching TV or movies, they often eat more than their bodies want or need. They also tend to eat foods that are full of sugar, salt, and fat instead of eating fresh fruits and vegetables.



What can I do?

Turn off food ads. To avoid commercials, either choose channels that don't include commercials or record the program and fast forward through commercials.

Eat in eating areas, with all screens off. Children will be able to focus on whether they're hungry, know when they're full, and they will enjoy their food more.

How can media affect exercise?

When children are at home, media can become default activities. Making other activities the default can help, but simply turning off screens doesn't necessarily mean that children will engage in more active play instead.

They can make children want to move. Some music and video games can encourage movement. Use those media to help get kids moving!



What can I do?

Build out-of-the-house physical activity into each day. If the weather isn't good enough to play outside, or there are fewer outdoor opportunities close to your home, look for indoor areas like local YMCAs where kids can play.

Try active video games. Several game consoles include games that get kids up on their feet. If your child loves video games, try some of these.

Dance to the music. Kids want to move, and the right kinds of music can help with that.

Where can I find more information?
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