Why is it important for my child to maintain a healthy weight?

- Maintaining a healthy weight will greatly lower your child's lifetime risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, certain cancers and so much more.
- It will help your child have more energy during the day and sleep better at night.
- It can help to improve mood and leads to overall higher quality of life.

How can I provide my child with healthy meals?

Let your plate be your guide:

Use the MyPlate model to help plan and plate out healthy meals:

- Fill one half of your child's plate with colorful non-starchy vegetables and fruits such as broccoli, tomatoes and blueberries.
- Make at least half of your grains be whole grains. Examples include whole wheat bread, brown rice, oatmeal and barley.
- Choose lean cuts of meat, poultry and fish for protein. Emphasize plant-based proteins such as lentils, beans, soy foods (example: tofu, tempeh), nuts and seeds.
- Switch to low-fat and non-fat dairy products. For dairy alternatives try unsweetened soy milk, almond milk or cashew milk.
- If they want seconds during a meal, encourage your child to choose more of the vegetable or fruit.
- Visit [http://www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more information.
How can I provide my child with healthy drinks?

- Water is always a great option! Add some flavor and fun to your child’s water by infusing it with fruits and vegetables such as sliced oranges, cucumber or berries.
- Milk is a wonderful source of protein and strengthens your child’s bones. Switch to skim milk to still get the great benefits without the additional fat. Plant-based milks with calcium are also great options (soy milk).
- Limit the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages, sports drinks and juices.

How can eating colorful food help my child stay healthy?

- When it comes to vegetables and fruits it is best to eat a spectrum of colors! Each color will provide your child with a variety of different vitamins and minerals.
- Vegetables and fruits are also a great source of fiber which will help your child to feel full.
- Encourage your child to eat at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruits every day.
- For more recipes and tips on how to add more vegetables and fruits into your family’s diet, visit: http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.

How can I help my child get active?

- Encourage your child to be active for 60 or more minutes every day. Find moderate intensity physical activities that your child enjoys!
- Include fun family activities that promote an active lifestyle. Go for a bike ride or take a hike through the park.
- Limit the amount of time your child spends watching TV, playing video games and surfing the web to no more than 2 hours per day. By limiting screen time your child will be better able to meet their activity goals.
What else can I do to help my child eat well?

- Model healthy eating habits yourself! If you are eating well and maintaining an active lifestyle your child is more likely to do the same.
- Schedules can get hectic, but aim to eat together as a family as much as possible.
- Provide your child with structured meals and snacks. This is especially important to remember over the summer months when children have more chances to graze and eat out of boredom.
- Do you have a future “foodie”? Let them lend a helping hand with menu planning, grocery shopping and cooking.
- Aim to decrease overall consumption of saturated fat, refined carbohydrates and added sugars. Read nutrition facts labels to know what your family is eating. For more information visit: http://michmed.org/QRK22 or search “food facts FDA” in your online search engine.

How can I learn more?

- Registered dietitian nutritionists are experts in food and nutrition. Ask your child’s primary care doctor for a referral to an ambulatory care Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.
- The Michigan Medicine Pediatric Weight Management Clinic uses a family-based behavioral approach, designed for patients 2-18 years old with a BMI (Body Mass Index) at or above the 85th percentile. To learn more or request an appointment call the clinic at (734) 615-3829.