

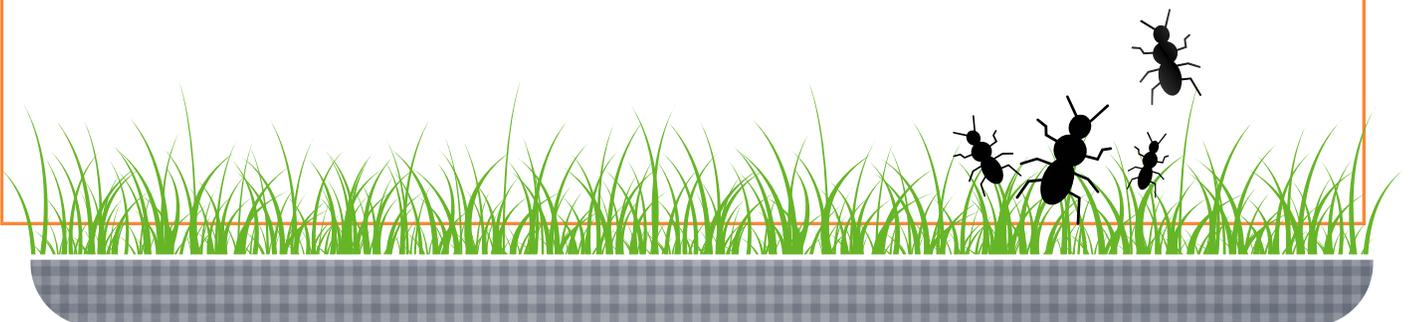
July 2016



BEATING THE SUMMER SLUMP

What is the Summer Slump?

School is out and the weather is great! Kids no longer have to sit in a classroom for hours. The longer days and warmer weather gives kids ample opportunity to play outside for hours. So why do kids gain more weight in the summer than any other time of the year? Why have numerous studies indicated that kids are more likely to pack on the pounds during the season that provides the most opportunity for physical activity? While kids need to grow year round, the summer season presents numerous challenges when it comes to keeping your child growing at a healthy, age-appropriate rate.



Why Does Excess Weight Gain in the Summer Matter?

The Statistics

It is no secret that there is an obesity epidemic in the United States. In 2012 12.7 million 2-19 year olds were classified as obese in the United States.

Percentage of children classified as obese:

- 8.4% of 2-5 year olds
- 17.7% of 6-11 year olds
- 20.5% of 12-19 year olds

The spotlight has been on how schools can make lunches healthier and increase the amount of time children are physically active. However, by age 18 the average child only spends 13% of their waking time in school (Downey).

Unfortunately, children with obesity are more likely to gain excessive weight during the summer months than children without obesity. This weight gain cycle has serious short term and long term consequences.

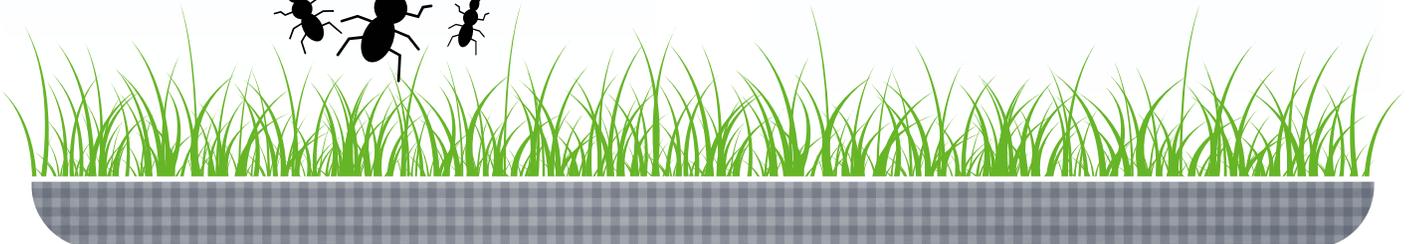
The Consequences

Children with obesity are at an increased risk of suffering from obesity as an adult (cdc.gov).

Obesity increases your child's risk for developing:

- * Type 2 Diabetes
- * Increased blood pressure & increased cholesterol
- * Heart Disease
- * Metabolic Syndrome
- * Sleep Apnea
- * Asthma
- * Cancer
- * Fatty Liver

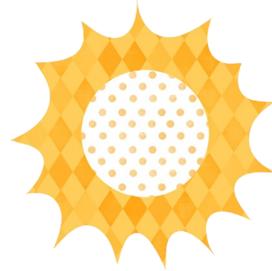
Childhood obesity increases your child's risk of developing these conditions later in life no matter how much your child weights as an adult.



Lack of a Schedule

During the school year kids eat all of their meals and snacks at approximately the same time everyday. Between school, homework and afterschool activities, there is little time for children to snack mindlessly. This often changes during the summer, when a lot of kids do not have a set schedule. Inconsistent meal times may cause kids to snack continuously

throughout the day. A lack of a set schedule may lead children to eat out of boredom if they have nothing else to occupy their time.



What Causes the Summer Slump??

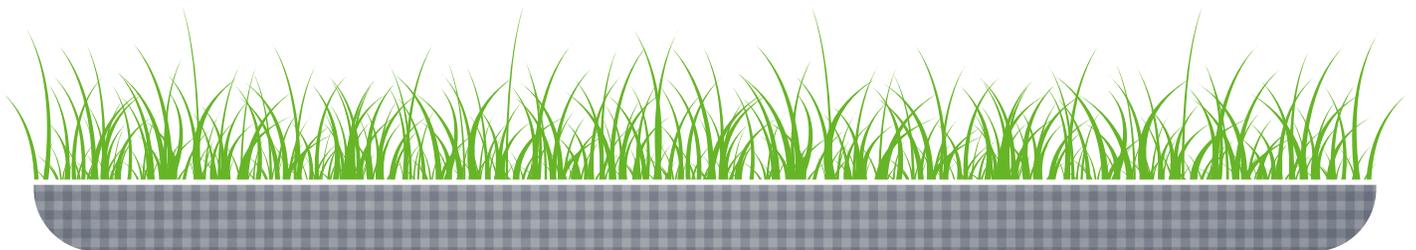
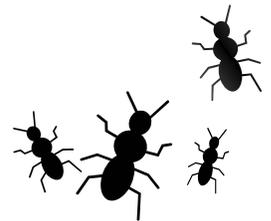
Decreased Physical Activity & Increased Screen Time

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children need at least an hour of physical activity each day and should limit screen time to 2 hours per day.

Often, screen time increases and physical activity decreases during summer break (Wang). Instead of playing outside, many kids spend hours in front of the TV or computer watching shows and playing video games. The TV keeps kids occupied and quiets the "I'm bored" complaints while parents continue to work.

More fast food

Schools are no longer providing the breakfasts and lunches that many parents rely on, especially those on a budget. Busy parents often resort to fast food because it is inexpensive and quick. Kids end up consuming more calories, fat and salt eating fast food versus school meals.



More Vacations & Social Events

With kids out of school summer is the prime time of the year to take a vacation. Summer weekends are also a popular time for graduation parties, holidays and birthday celebrations, as well as family reunions. Additionally, carnivals seem to be popping up all over the place plus most ice cream parlors are only open in the summer. It

is very easy to allow the kids to overindulge because *“this is a special event that only happens once a year.”* However the summer is full of “special events” and overindulging at every event can lead to unhealthy eating habits and increased weight gain.

How To Avoid The Summer Slump!

A daily routine will help your child eat well and stay active!

Keep meal times & snack times consistent

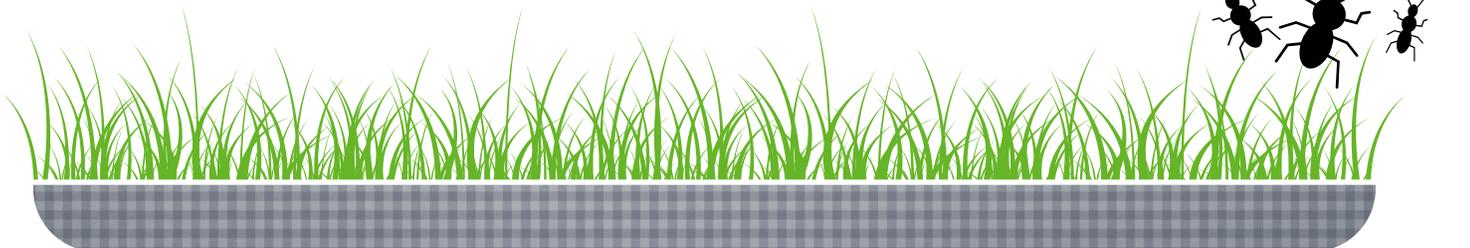
Attempt to follow the same meal times kids follow during the school year. Kids are less likely to snack constantly when they have a predictable schedule.

Schedule time for physical activity everyday

Children need at least one hour of physical activity each day:

- Take family walks or bike rides in the evening.

- Take your kids to a museum or zoo where they can learn while getting some physical activity into their day!
- Find new parks to play at! Kids will be excited to explore everything a new playground has to offer.
- Sign up for summer camps! Summer provides a wide variety of camps ranging from half day sports camps to month long sleep away camps. With most camps your child will have the opportunity to learn about something that they are interested in while keeping meal times consistent and staying active!



Limit screen time

Children should have no more than 2 hours of screen time each day. Instead of keeping children occupied in front of the TV:

- Set aside at least a half hour each day for reading. Make a point to take a trip to the library once a week for new books. Aside from getting away from the TV, reading will help them retain and improve reading skills they gained during the school year.
- Have them assist you with age-appropriate chores. Children as young as 2 can help pick up toys, while 6 year olds are old enough to help empty the dishwasher. Young kids want to model what their parents do and are very excited that they can do “grown up” tasks.

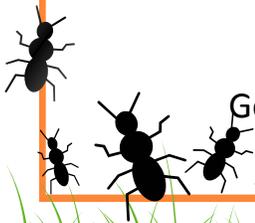
Have your child help you in the kitchen

- Turn a boring trip to the grocery store into a fun outing for your kids by making it a scavenger hunt. Have each child pick out a new food item they would like to try and find a recipe together.
- Have them assist you with age appropriate tasks when making meals: 3 year-olds can help mix ingredients kids as young as 5 years old can learn to cut food with a small knife. Bonus: kids are more likely to want to try a new food if they helped prepare it.
- Take a weekly trip to a local farmers market. This is a great way to learn more about your community and discover new foods.

Encourage healthy eating by setting an example

- Make sure you are eating healthy and taking time to exercise. Your child to be more willing to eat fruits and vegetables if they see you eating those foods.
- Make meal time family time. Turn off the cell phones and the TV.
- Offer the same meal to everyone but make sure to include something your child likes.
- Offer kids choices. Asking “would you like carrots or peas?” will have better results than “would you like carrots?”. Children like to have a say in their food selection.

Go to [choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips) for more tips on eating healthy all year!



STAY HEALTHY ON THE GO!!

On the Road!

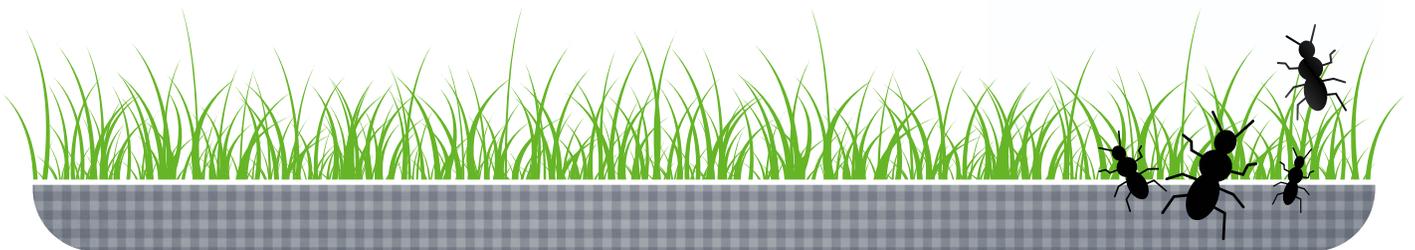
- Keep a cooler in your car and stock it with some of the snack ideas listed on the right.
- Instead of stopping to eat at a restaurant, have sandwiches packed and pull off at a local park to have a picnic and let the kids run around for a bit.
- To avoid constant munching, play games the whole family can enjoy such as I Spy and 20 questions.

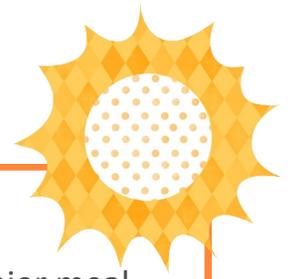
Airplanes

Air travel presents its own unique challenges when it comes to eating well and getting in some physical activity. Delayed flights and limited food options can have a significant impact on what your family eats. While you cannot help delays, you can look up what options there are for food at each airport you will be at. Having a plan will prevent you from eating at the first place you see when you get off the plane. If possible, bring snacks on the plane. Flying is dehydrating so make sure to provide everyone a water bottle for the flight.

ON THE GO SNACKS!

- ◆ String cheese
- ◆ Trail mix
- ◆ Peanut butter sandwich
- ◆ Turkey sandwich
- ◆ Cut up veggies with humus for dipping
- ◆ Cut up fruit
- ◆ Whole grain pretzels
- ◆ Pita chips and hummus
- ◆ Low fat yogurt
- ◆ Apple sauce
- ◆ Cottage cheese with berries
- ◆ Add peanut butter or cheese to apple slices and crackers as a protein source
- ◆ Water bottles





At Restaurants & Special Events

- If possible look at a menu ahead of time. It is easier to choose a healthier meal before arriving hungry and ordering the first thing that sounds good.
- Order the lunch option if possible and strongly encourage children to order off the kids menu to avoid huge portion sizes.
- Choose foods that are baked, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted, or steamed.
- Limit choosing items described as crispy, breaded, creamed, fried, buttered or battered.
- Remember you are the customer at a restaurant. It is okay to make simple request such as sauces on the side or requesting a side salad in place of fries. If you find the bread basket too tempting, do not hesitate to ask the waiter not to bring the bread.
- Encourage your kids to eat their protein foods and vegetables first so they are less likely to be hungry soon after leaving the restaurant.

Simple Swaps To Help Your Family Eat Healthier This Summer

Use Greek yogurt in traditionally creamy salads instead of mayo or sour cream

Try frozen fruit pops instead of ice cream for dessert

Go for the turkey burger instead of the regular burger or hot dog at a barbeque

Opt for fruit salad instead of coleslaw as a side

Drink sparkling water instead of soda



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