

THE FITNESS EQUATION:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Physical Activity} \\ + \text{Balanced Diet} \\ \hline = \text{Fit Kids} \end{array}$$

Help your children achieve a fit and healthy lifestyle.

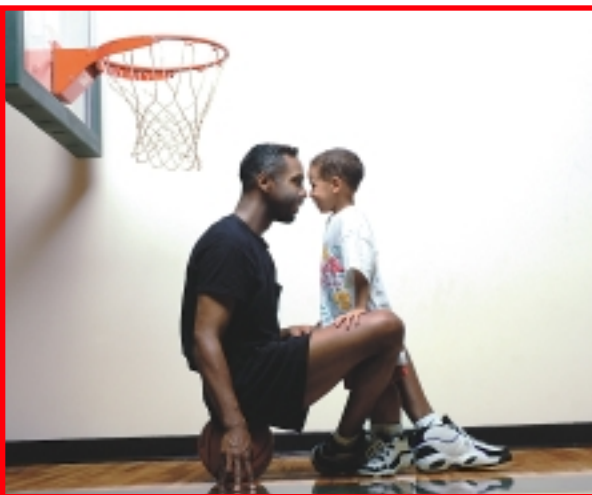


Your Children's Best Health Insurance

Did you know that children's obesity levels are at an all-time high? The percentage of children who are overweight or obese has more than doubled in the last 30 years. Why? One of the main reasons is that kids are not physically active today. Here are the facts:

- Only one of three children is physically active every day.
- Only 25 percent of kids receive adequate physical education in school.
- Forty percent of U.S. school districts are considering eliminating recess.
- Many children and teens do not eat nutritionally balanced diets.

The lack of physical activity among Americans of all ages is so critical, it is considered to be a major health risk factor. One of the best ways you can assure your children's future health is to be sure that they are physically active for at least an hour every day.



Physical Education Provides A Solution!

The goal of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) is to guarantee every child in America the best possible health insurance: the opportunity to learn and participate in a healthy, physically active lifestyle. To achieve this goal, we must educate the “whole child,” both the mind and the body. Every child needs:

- A quality physical education program in school.
- At least an hour of physical activity every day.
- Daily recess in elementary school.
- A healthy, balanced diet based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid.

Quality physical education programs in our nation’s schools are essential to develop life-long physical skills and activities that contribute to fitness and good health. Physical education offers many benefits—physical, social and mental. For instance, exercise helps increase bone density, which is particularly important for young women to avoid osteoporosis in later life. Physical activity also helps kids burn calories and achieve an ideal body weight—important keys to maintaining a healthy heart.

Physical activity also can improve self-confidence, support academic achievement, reduce the risk of depression and increase self-discipline.



Get Active Together

Parents have the most important role in assuring their children lead an active and healthy lifestyle. Set an example by participating in physical activities with your kids. Walk, bicycle, play catch, exercise in your home or apartment, play active games like running or rope jumping...the choices are endless. Use physical



activity as a reward—you can visit a playground with a young child, for example, as a special outing.

To be active, your children must spend less time sitting and more time “doing.” Limit the time your children watch television, play video games or sit in front of the computer.

You also can be an advocate for quality physical education in your school system. Encourage your child’s school to provide the best possible physical education classes, as well as daily recess. Recommend that your school refer to NASPE’s National Standards for Physical Education and Program Guidelines, which provide information about what a quality physical education program entails.

Eat A Balanced Diet

Diet is the second component in the fitness equation. Children need to learn how to build a nutritious diet by making wise food choices based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. A nutritious diet includes a variety of foods, including grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy foods and meat.

It's okay for children to enjoy foods like candy or other sweet snacks as part of an overall nutritionally balanced diet. No single food causes obesity. Teach and reinforce smart eating decisions for fitness and health: eating only a chocolate bar or cookies and milk for lunch is not a wise food choice. Enjoying these foods in moderation as desserts or snacks is a wiser choice.

FOOD Guide PYRAMID



Balance is the key. Fitness— which includes maintaining an appropriate body weight— depends on eating a balanced diet and being physically active every day. Children who lead inactive lifestyles are more likely to be overweight.



To order resources to help improve your school's physical education program, call 800-321-0789.

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An association of the American Alliance for Health,
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