

Family Health: Assessment & Action Plan

January 2017

**By Nan Maley, RN
Director of Corporate Wellness
Sullivan Benefits**

Making lifestyle changes as a family not only will help your children manage their weight and learn healthy behaviors, but you and your entire family will benefit.

Teaching your children healthy behaviors can be challenging, and it takes the effort of the entire family to help your children maintain a healthy lifestyle. This assessment can help you gauge where you stand now, and the action plan will help your family move toward healthier habits.

Assessment

Healthy Eating

1. How many servings of fruits or vegetables do your children eat daily, on average?

- None
- Few (one to two cups)
- Some (three to four cups)
- Many (five or more cups)

Children should strive for five servings of produce daily.

2. How many unhealthy snacks or sodas do your children consume daily, on average?

- Many (five or more)
- Some (three to four)
- Not many (one to two)
- None

Children should limit unhealthy snacks and drinks.

3. How many days a week do your children eat a healthy breakfast, on average?

- Never
- One to two days
- Three to four days
- Five to seven days

Children should eat a healthy breakfast every day.

4. How many days per week do your children eat a healthy dinner, on average?

- Never
- One to two days
- Three to four days
- Five to seven days

You should aim to prepare healthy meals at home five or more days per week.

Physical Activity

5. How many days per week do your children get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity, on average?

- Never
- One to two days
- Three to four days
- Five to seven days

Children should get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week.

Screen Time

6. How much screen time (TV, video games, non-homework computer) do your children have daily, on average?

- None
- Less than one hour
- One to two hours
- Three or more hours

Screen time creates an inactive lifestyle, and should be limited to less than two hours daily.

Role Modeling

7. How many days per week does your family eat healthy dinners together, on average?

- Never
- One to two days
- Three to four days
- Five to seven days

Children learn from parents' behavior. Eating healthy meals as a family is important for promoting healthy eating.

8. How often is your family physically active together, on average?

- Never
- Once per week
- Twice per week
- Three or more times weekly

Exercising as a family can help get your children excited about physical activity.

9. How much screen time do adults in your house have daily?

- None
- Less than one hour
- One to two hours
- Two or more hours

If children see their parents spending hours at the computer or TV, they will see that as acceptable.

Action Plan

If many of your answers were not the best, don't worry. Use those answers as a starting place for improvement. Choose goals from the following list that you would like to strive toward within your family. Start with easier, reasonable goals (i.e., "at least three servings of produce per day") so you are not overwhelmed. As your family adjusts, move on to the healthiest habits (i.e., "at least five servings of produce per day").

Healthy Eating

Fruits and Vegetables

- ✓ Children eat at least three to five servings of produce per day.
- ✓ Buy fresh fruits and vegetables each week.
- ✓ Visit the local farmer's market each week.

Unhealthy Choices

- ✓ Children limit unhealthy snacks to one to three servings per day.
- ✓ Children limit soda and high-sugar drinks to one per day.
- ✓ Make it easier for children to choose healthy snacks.
- ✓ Children limit unhealthy convenience food to three times weekly.
- ✓ Limit unhealthy snacks bought at the store to one item per trip.
- ✓ Limit eating out to three times per week.

Healthy Meals

- ✓ Children eat a healthy breakfast every day.
- ✓ Children bring a healthy lunch to school three times per week.
- ✓ Serve appropriate portions at all meals.
- ✓ Promote healthy food options in the school.
- ✓ Replace dessert with healthy options (fruit, sorbet, etc.) three times per week.
- ✓ Plan healthy meals in advance each week.
- ✓ Purchase items for those meals in advance each week.

Physical Activity

- ✓ Walk children to school, church or library at least once a week.
- ✓ Let each child choose a family physical activity once each week.
- ✓ Make walking the dog the children's or family's responsibility.
- ✓ Reward children for good behavior with fun physical activities (bowling, batting cages, etc.).
- ✓ Make active chores part of the children's responsibilities.
- ✓ Create active alternatives for children not interested in sports (walking, tag, etc.).

Screen Time

- ✓ Manage family free time without screen time.
- ✓ Limit TV time to two hours per day per child.
- ✓ Limit video game time to 30 minutes per day per child.
- ✓ Limit entertainment computer time to 30 minutes per day per child.
- ✓ Make a habit of having family use one centrally located TV together.

Role Modeling

Healthy Eating

- ✓ Eat healthy family dinners together at least three times per week.
- ✓ Involve children in healthy meal preparation at least once a week.
- ✓ Take children grocery shopping to choose healthy options each week.
- ✓ Adults eat at least five servings of produce per day.
- ✓ Adults limit junk food to one serving per day.
- ✓ Adults eat a healthy breakfast at least five times per week.
- ✓ Adults bring a healthy lunch to work at least once a week.
- ✓ Adults eat nutritious after-dinner snacks at least five times per week.

Physical Activity

- ✓ Go on a family walk or bike ride at least once a week.
- ✓ Adults get 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.
- ✓ Take an active role in children's sports practices.

Screen Time

- ✓ Adults limit total entertainment screen time to two hours per day.
- ✓ Adults limit TV time to one to two hours daily.
- ✓ Limit the number of TVs in the house.

Source: Zywave

Contact [Sullivan Benefits](#) for assistance on developing a health action plan for you and your family! Congratulations, just taking the time to read this article is a positive step toward introducing wellness and the benefits available from a healthier lifestyle. Thank you for your time and THINK WELLNESS!