

Obesity Prevention Starts Early In Your 9 Months – 2 Year Old Child!

By: Bridget Swinney MS, RD

The seeds of childhood obesity are planted early! The good news is that there are many things you can do to nip being overweight in the bud:

9 Months-2 Years:

As babies transition to table food, it's time to ask—is your family's diet one you'd like copied? If not, take a closer look at what eating habits you are passing on to your baby. Make sure the whole family's diet is one that is based on these foods:

- Whole grains as half of the family's grain portions
- At least 5 fruits and vegetables per day
- A variety of lean protein sources, including vegetarian sources
- Adequate calcium rich foods
- Limited sweet drinks (need to define –some people may interpret this as a few per week)
- Eating breakfast daily

And these healthy habits:

- Eating together as a family
- Limited screen time (this includes TV, video games and computers)
- Daily activity

The tricky part of this older baby/toddler stage is that as your baby exerts his growing independence, he is also likely to say no to many of his favorite, healthy foods. His growth slows down in the 2nd year and this translates into a less than robust appetite, which may worry you enough to take drastic measures.

Take my advice on this one—don't become a short order cook! With very few exceptions, babies and toddlers will eat what they need to grow and thrive. And they are fast learners too—they know that if you give a lot of positive attention to their waning appetites, it is surely something worth repeating. Remember the mantra—you are the family food gatekeeper. You decide what goes on the table, and you should make sure there are a variety of foods including one food your child likes. Your child, at every age, is in charge of deciding how much to eat, period.

[See Infant and Toddler, Healthy Eating Tips](#) for more ideas on how to grow a healthy child.

Modified from Baby Bites by Bridget Swinney MS, RD, Meadowbrook Press, 2007. Bridget is the author of [Baby Bites](#), [Healthy Food for Healthy Kids](#) and [Baby Bites](#), available at major book retailers. She consults at a public health clinic where she helps overweight children and their families. Visit her blog at www.babybitesbook.blogspot.com.

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