



## Supporting Children on Their Journey to Good Health

AS AMERICA wrangles over many daunting issues, no challenge is more urgent than protecting the health and safety of our children—now, and as they grow. Over the past four decades, we have witnessed childhood obesity grow to epidemic proportions. More than 12.7 million children and adolescents are obese or overweight. That’s roughly one child in every three, with low income and children of color disproportionately affected. This September, National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month provides a chance for all of us to learn more about this serious health condition. While there is no simple solution, there are many ways communities can support children on their journey to good health.

### ISSUES WITH CHILDHOOD OBESITY

- Children with obesity are at higher risk for having other chronic health conditions and diseases, such as asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems and Type 2 diabetes. They also have more risk factors for heart disease, high blood pressure and high cholesterol than their normal weight peers.



- Children with obesity can be bullied and are also more likely to suffer from social isolation, depression and lower self-esteem than their normal weight peers.
- Obesity in childhood is more likely to persist into adulthood. This can lead to lifelong physical and mental health problems. Adult obesity is associated with a higher risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and many types of cancers.

Many factors can have an impact on childhood obesity, including eating and physical activity behaviors,

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## DID YOU KNOW...

- **September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.**
- **National Childhood Injury Prevention week is September 1–7.** The purpose of this week is to raise awareness of the preventable injuries that harm and kill millions of children every year. Do your part by talking to children about safe habits and behaviors.
- **September 19 is Get Ready Day** established by the American Public Health Association (APHA). The goal of Get Ready Day is to arm individuals, families and communities with knowledge that will help them cope with crises, such as natural disasters, infectious diseases and pandemic illnesses.
- Families that play together, stay together! We all know that quality time with our family is paramount in building stronger relationships. **National Family Day** is celebrated annually on the fourth Monday of September.

*JPMA.org, APHA.org, casafamilyday.org*

### Quotable Quotes

“What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family.”

– Mother Theresa

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## Supporting Children on their Journey to Good Health

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genetics, metabolism, home environment, as well as social factors. For some children and families, obesity may be influenced by the following:

- Too much time being inactive
- Lack of sleep
- Lack of safe places in the community for physical activity
- Easy access to inexpensive, high calorie foods and sugary beverages
- Lack of access to affordable, healthier foods

When parents are at work all day, early care and education providers play a critical role because this is the primary environment for children to eat, play and grow. By modeling healthy eating and physically active lifestyles, early care and education providers can set our children on the road to a lifetime of good habits.

### Adopt policies and practices that support healthy eating, regular physical activity and limit screen time:

- **Offer nutritious, lower-calorie foods** such as fruits and vegetables in place of foods high in added sugars and solid fats at meals and snacks.
- **Turn teaching concepts into movement for children.** For example, providers who want to teach letter recognition could post letters on the wall in the classroom as targets for bean bags.
- **Make sure drinking water is always available** as a no-calorie alternative to sugary beverages and limit juice intake to no more than once per day.
- **Eat together and make nutrition fun.** Serve meals family style so kids can choose what they want to eat and how much to serve themselves. Talk to the kids in your care about food groups –fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods and dairy products.
- **Keep it simple.** You don't need a recipe with a lot of ingredients to create a delicious dish. Plus, when you choose a simple recipe, you can spend more time teaching kids to prepare healthy foods and enjoying your meal together.



- **Make menu planning a group activity.** Brainstorm meal ideas with the children to decide what's on the menu for the week. This helps engage children and involve them with meal choices. Encourage them to come up with menus that use nutritious ingredients and fruits and vegetables in season.
- **Take kids on grocery store trips.** To get ready for the trip, kids can make their own grocery lists of healthy foods on colored construction paper. At the store, they can hunt for a vegetable or fruit that matches the color of their paper (like purple cabbage, red peppers, orange tangerines and yellow squash). Encourage them to be adventurous – try pointing out produce they haven't tried.
- **Bring kids into the kitchen.** When kids get to be chefs, they want to taste their creations. They will be delighted at the taste of fresh fruits and vegetables and proud of what they have made!
- **Be a role model!** Children watch everything we do, so eat healthy meals and snacks and get plenty of physical activity every day.

Addressing obesity can start in the home, but also requires the support of providers and communities. Working together, we all have a role in making healthier foods, beverages and physical activity the easy choice for children to help prevent childhood obesity. The fight against childhood obesity gains momentum in September and the results can last a lifetime. All children deserve a healthy start in life; it's our responsibility to make that possible.

— Sources: [health.gov](http://health.gov), [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov)

## KIDS' HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

# Head Lice: Myths and Truths

**IT IS NO SECRET** that head lice are a common problem among children and a high stressor for the adults in their lives. If your child must be treated for head lice, don't panic, it is something most children will go through at least once as lice are present in every community, school district and social class. The key is to learn ways to treat and prevent infestations, as well as understand common truths and myths about lice.

## HEAD LICE LIFE CYCLE

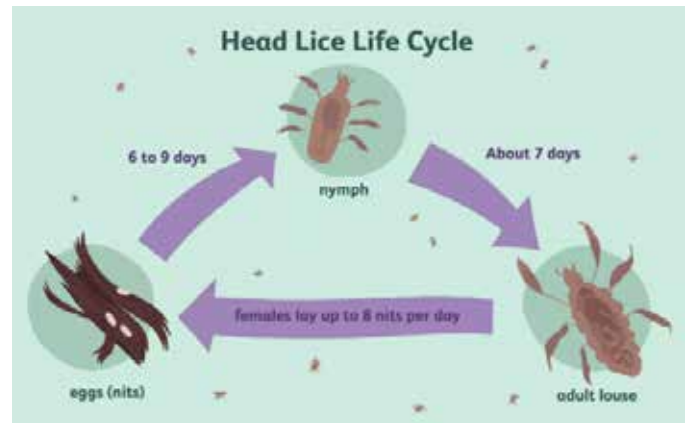
**Nits:** Or eggs, are oval, yellow to white in color and about the size of a knot in a thread. They are laid close to the scalp, firmly attached to the hair shaft and need body heat and six to nine days to incubate and hatch.

**Nymphs:** The eggs hatch into nymphs, with the empty nit shell remaining attached to the hair shaft. The nymphs are about the size of the head of a pin and are yellow to rust in color. They develop into adults after about seven days.

**Adult louse:** The adult louse is about the size of a pinhead and looks like a moving grain of rice. It is oval with three legs on each side, is rust in color and moves fast. Adult lice can live for up to 30 days on the head. If they leave the scalp they will die quickly, surviving a day or two at most.

## HOW TO AVOID AND PREVENT HEAD LICE

- Recognize the main symptoms of head lice: an itchy scalp and small red bumps or sores on the back of the neck and scalp.
- If your own child or any child in your care has lice, please notify the other families so that they can inspect their own children and start treatment if necessary. The key is to act swiftly so it's conquered quickly.
- Encourage children to avoid sharing things that have been on or near another child's head, like combs, hats, hairbrushes, towels, helmets, pillows, sleeping bags, etc.
- Teach kids to hang up their coats and hats on individual hooks, where they won't touch each other.
- Regularly clean objects that have direct contact or are shared with other children, such as car seats, pillows and headphones.
- Check children for nits and live lice at least once a week. They are often found at the back of their head, near the neck and behind the ears.



- Unfortunately lice will not be prevented by keeping your child's hair short or in a ponytail, nor will special shampoos, conditioners or hairspray help.

## MYTHS AND TRUTHS

Some myths persist about lice that add to the stress and simply are not true.

*You are not more likely to get head lice if you have poor personal hygiene.* Head lice are equal-opportunity parasites; they live exclusively on human blood. It doesn't matter how often you wash your hair or if you have dandruff. They are attracted to blood, not poor hygiene.

*Head lice do not jump from person to person or fly, they can only crawl.* And because head lice thrive solely on human blood, they move from person to person, never from another animal or pet.

*You do not have to disinfect your whole house.* Head lice and eggs that may be in bedding, on towels and around the house usually die within days without a human host. However as a precaution you do want to launder everything that has come in close contact with someone with lice within the last 48 hours such as bedding, hats and towels. You'll also want to vacuum where an infected person usually sits or lays. Don't forget the car seats.

While lice is an unfortunate rite of passage for many children, it can be combated with diligence and keeping a cool head.

— Adapted from [www.verywellhealth.com](http://www.verywellhealth.com)

## Caprese Pasta with Fresh Tomato Sauce

<b>Tomatoes, fresh</b> ..... 8	<b>Parmesan cheese, shaved</b> ..... 1 cup
<b>Salt</b> ..... ½ tsp	<b>Fresh mozzarella, diced</b> ..... 12 ounces
<b>Olive oil</b> ..... 1 Tbsp	<b>Basil, fresh, torn</b> ..... 1 cup
<b>Garlic, minced</b> ..... 6 cloves	<b>Butter</b> ..... 3 Tbsp
<b>Whole wheat pasta</b> ..... 8 ounces	<b>Balsamic vinegar or glaze (optional)</b>

1. Slice tomatoes in half crosswise, and scoop out seeds into a large bowl using your fingers and squeezing lightly. Dice tomatoes and add to the large bowl of tomato seeds and juice. Add ½ tsp salt, cover and let sit 1 or more hours.
2. Add oil to a saucepan and sauté garlic without letting it brown. Using a fine mesh sieve, strain the tomatoes over the sauté pan so that the tomato juice flows directly into the sauté pan with the garlic olive oil. Set chopped tomatoes aside. Cook the tomato juice over medium high heat for several minutes until it is reduced and lightly thickened.
3. While the tomato juice is reducing, boil pasta according to package directions. Add the parmesan, mozzarella, drained pasta and basil to the large bowl of chopped tomatoes. Mix well.
4. When tomato sauce is reduced and slightly thickened, add butter and swirl to blend. Add to pasta mixture, toss together.
5. If desired, balsamic glaze will brighten the flavors. Add a splash of balsamic vinegar when reducing the tomato juice or add a drizzle of balsamic glaze to the final dish.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate, vegetable and whole grain-rich

— Adapted from *greenvalleykitchen.com*

## Homemade Lunchbox Chicken Nuggets

<b>Chicken, uncooked, ground</b> ... 1 pound	<b>Zest of lemon, grated</b> ..... 1
<b>Mashed potatoes</b> ..... ½ cup	<b>Salt</b> ..... ½ tsp
<b>Parsley, chopped</b> ..... 2 Tbsp	<b>Panko bread crumbs</b> ..... ¾ cup
<b>Garlic powder</b> ..... 1 tsp	<b>Parmesan cheese</b> ..... 2 Tbsp

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a baking pan with foil, then place a rack in pan and spray with oil. Mix together the chicken, mashed potatoes and seasonings.
2. In a shallow bowl, mix together the panko and cheese. With moistened hands, shape tablespoonfuls of the chicken mixture into a “nugget” shape. Gently press the nugget into the bread crumb mixture to coat and flatten slightly.
3. Place the nuggets on the rack and lightly spray with oil. Bake for 25–30 minutes and serve with a dipping sauce such as honey mustard or BBQ sauce.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate

— Adapted from *Weelicious Lunches/Simple Bites*

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Octopus Tag



Try this fun outdoor game. For additional fun, costumes can be worn.

- Set up an “Ocean” in a grassy area and mark the boundaries.
- Determine who will be the first Octopus, they will start in the center of the Ocean.
- All other players are Fish. Fish line up at one end of the Ocean.
- The Octopus calls out “I am the Octopus, full of black potion – Let’s see if you can cross my Ocean!”
- The Fish try to “swim” (run) across the ocean and the Octopus tries to tag them.
- If tagged before reaching the other side, they become “Crabs” on the ocean floor. Crabs must stay where they were tagged, leaving one foot planted as they also tag players running by. Any player tagged becomes a Crab.
- Each time players reach the other side of the Ocean, the Octopus and Crabs say the chant again and the players try to cross the Ocean again.
- The last Fish tagged becomes the new Octopus!

— *ZiggityZoom.com*

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**Food Q.** Why did the orange stop rolling down the hill?  
**Funny A.** Because it ran out of juice!