



Behavior Guidelines

- **Eat slowly.**
 - ◇ It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that it is full. Eating too fast usually will lead you to eat too much.
 - ◇ Make meal times a family event without TV. This will prompt discussion and likely slow eating.
 - ◇ Put your fork down between bites.
 - ◇ Try to serve plates in the kitchen and avoid self-serve.
- **Keep a food journal.**
 - ◇ Every time you eat, snack, or drink write it down in your journal.
 - ◇ After a week, review your journal to identify events that lead to overeating.
 - ◇ Make efforts to change eating habits after reviewing your journal.
- **Exercise.**
 - ◇ Consider keeping an exercise log to keep track of daily exercise.
 - ◇ Try to be active for 1 hour every day.
- **Set realistic goals.**
 - ◇ If weight loss is recommended by your doctor, set small weekly goals ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 lbs). Ask friends and family to help support you.
- **Stay positive.**
 - ◇ Praise yourself or your child for even the smallest positive change in eating and/or exercise habits.
 - ◇ Make it a two-way street. Have your children “reward” you for positive changes that you make.
 - ◇ Never shame your child about eating, activity, or weight.
 - ◇ Help your child replace negative thinking (“I can’t”) with positive thinking (“I can do this”).

Source:

Behavior modification. In: *Preventing Childhood Obesity Self-Help Materials*. Houston, Texas: Texas Children’s Hospital; 2003.