Healthy Habits for Kids During a Pandemic

All families want their kids to be happy and healthy. Keeping up with healthy habits during a pandemic can be challenging. Our routines are different. Part or all of school is at home now in front of a computer. We can’t go out to the usual places. **Let’s focus on what we can control.**

**Focus on feeling healthy and strong**

Many people, including kids, will have changes in their weight this year because our routines are different.

**This is normal and okay!**

- Put your focus on habits that make you feel healthy and strong, not on trying to control weight.

**Have unprocessed snack choices available**

We tend to snack more when staying home. Keep unprocessed snacks available, such as:

- Apples, bananas, berries
- Baby carrots, tomatoes
- Yogurt, string cheese
- Unsalted nuts, raisins
- Whole grain English muffins
- Homemade popcorn
- Graham crackers
- Cinnamon raisin toast

**Get kids involved at mealtime**

Did you know that kids are more likely to eat a balanced meal if they helped plan and make it?

- Let them pick something they would like to make for the family and just be their helper if they need it.
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Let kids help with household chores

Chores help kids develop a sense of independence and contribution, which is important for their overall health too.

- Younger kids can help dust and wipe down high-touch germ areas like light switches, door knobs, and remotes.
- Older kids can help vacuum, sweep, load the dishwasher, and put away laundry.
- Don’t worry if it’s not done perfectly. Put on some music and just have fun together!

Balance screen time with “green time”

We can’t help the fact that we need to be on the computer for classes right now. To balance out all the sitting, try:

- Go outside to walk and play each day. We need fresh air, movement and daylight to keep us feeling healthy and strong.
- Pick a place and bring something to play with. Bring a ball to the park or bring some chalk to play hopscotch on the sidewalk.
- Look for places with green trees and plants. Being around green trees and plants lowers blood pressure, helps us breathe deeper, and relieves stress.

Find fun indoor movement activities

There are many fun indoor activities you and your kids can do indoors to keep everyone moving, such as:

- Put on some music and dance!
- Make an indoor obstacle course with pillows, the couch, and boxes.
- Have a pillow fight.
- Play a game of hide and seek.
- Hit a balloon up in the air and don’t let it touch the ground.
- Make a contest, such as who can do the most jumping jacks in a minute.
Fun Ideas and Resources

Outdoor Activities:

- **Explore places with green trees and plants.** Find trails in your neighborhood on alltrails.com. They are all over New York City!

- **Go for a geocache hunt.** Did you know there are many hidden treasures in NYC? Geocaching.com lets you use the GPS on your phone to hunt for nearby hidden treasures with small clues. When you find it, there is a place to sign your name and sometimes a little prize to take too.

- **Do a photo scavenger hunt.** Let your kids take photos of what they find in nature, such as a flower, plant, tree, bird, bug, an animal, and an interesting cloud.

Indoor Movement Activities:

- **YouTube has all kinds of fun movement activities for kids!** Try searching for This or That workouts, such as:
  - Emoji This or That Workout
  - Pokémon Fitness
  - Super Mario Fitness Challenge
  - Minecraft Fitness Challenge
  - Would You Rather Workout

- **Activities and Exercises for Younger Kids:**
  - Debbie Doo Kids TV
  - Jack Hartmann Brain Breaks
  - Kiboomers
  - Simon Says

- **Activities and Exercises for Older Kids:**
  - Just Dance Videos
  - KidzBop