

Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids

A Virginia Cooperative Extension
Program to
Prevent Childhood Overweight





Overweight is growing at epidemic rates among U.S. children and adolescents.¹ Eating disorders are also a concern among youth. Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids is a research-based program developed and tested by Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech.

It promotes healthy attitudes and behaviors toward diet, physical activity, and body image among youth ages 7 to 14. Proper nutrition, physical activity, and positive body image are all important if children are to achieve and maintain healthy weights, in addition to optimal physical and emotional health. Healthy kids also learn better.

The best treatment for overweight is prevention.



The curriculum builds upon research conducted at Virginia Tech and focuses on six key topics.

Smart Foods

The importance of nutrition and physical activity and an introduction to MyPyramid

Smart Choices

Portion size and simple ways to enjoy food in moderation

Smart Drinks

Choosing healthy beverages

Smart Snacks

How to choose and prepare simple, healthy snacks

Smart Activities

Different types of movement to promote lifelong activity and health

Smart Image

Respecting one's body and self as well as different sized and shaped individuals

In a study conducted with 311 fourth and fifth graders, children reported significant improvements in nutrition and physical activity knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors as a result of participating in the Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids program (Imbur, 2005).

The program is available in selected Virginia counties by Family and Consumer Science and 4-H Extension Agents. For more information, contact your local Extension office or visit <http://www.ext.vt.edu>.



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Virginia Cooperative Extension

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