

LET'S TALK PEDIATRIC OBESITY

Engage patients and families in nonjudgmental, supportive conversations to facilitate effective treatment, build trust, and motivate families to participate in healthier behaviors.

For impactful conversations:

-  **Ask to discuss patient's weight...** *"I would like to take a minute to talk about your growth chart numbers today and how it is changing"..."I talk to all my patients about healthy weight – can we discuss your weight today?"*
-  **Use non-stigmatizing language** (healthy weight, body mass index, unhealthy weight, healthy weight gain for age, height, or health) **instead of stigmatizing language** (obese, extremely obese, fat, weight problem, large, chubby, overweight)
-  **Use evidence-informed talking points and avoid lecturing...** *"I care about your health and safety – at this age and height a weight like this can cause health problems"..."I believe this is really important for your health"*
-  **Acknowledge and validate emotional responses...** *"I believe you are trying so hard"..."I bet giving up soda for the past few weeks was very difficult"..."I see you are sticking with your goal even when it's hard work"*

**Ask your patients
what they are ready to change.
Assure them even small changes
can lead to meaningful
health benefits.**

Up to 80% of patients may not be ready to make changes at the first visit. If they are not ready, ask if you can bring it up at the next visit to help move through the early stages of change.

Take time to have
the conversation
at every visit –
what you say matters

Screen for
mental health conditions
(e.g., depression,
ADHD, anxiety,
and eating disorders)

Discuss and encourage
healthy behaviors and
lifestyle changes as
first-line treatment

Offer meds
(https://bit.ly/Nov_2025_obesity_meds) and
bariatric surgery for
patients ≥ 12 years
when appropriate

Consider Medical University of South Carolina's Wellness Works

Family-centered, lifestyle-oriented program providing comprehensive and multidisciplinary expert care for patients ages 2 to 21 in South Carolina with concerns for developing obesity and comorbidities of obesity as well as lipid disorders, including high cholesterol, high triglycerides, and familial hypercholesterolemia.

Families receive:

- Personalized care from registered dietitians, pediatric physicians, and licensed social workers via in-person visits around the Charleston area and virtual visits across South Carolina.
- In-person and virtual fitness sessions on weekdays and Saturdays, monthly in-person group wellness sessions (in-person sessions in Charleston area only).

Call 843-876-0444 to schedule visit or send fax referral to 843-876-0442.

Eligible for coverage through most insurance plans.

<https://children.muschealth.org/medical-services/heart/wellness-works>

BUILD HEALTHY HABITS THAT LAST

Meet patients and their families where they are and guide them in developing timely, realistic goals that kids are willing to do AND parents/guardians are willing to support, one or two at a time. **Healthier behaviors are important for ALL** patients and their families.

2 – 5 YEARS OLD

Focus on simple, healthier routines, choices, and substitutions. Center activity goals on play, fun movement, and family togetherness. Choose active screen time when necessary. Try not to reward good behavior with treats for all ages.

6 – 12 YEARS OLD

Encourage healthier habits that kids will do when you are not around. Support kids in making their own food and drink choices. Prioritize and plan for movement, including physical activities or play that also develop skills. Schedule screen-free time.

13 – 17 YEARS OLD

Teach teens how to check for sugar in drinks and to eat healthier, balanced portions. Give teens more control over choosing physical activities and encourage goal-oriented exercise and fitness. Limit screen time.

REMIND PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS TO BECOME HEALTHIER TOGETHER — KIDS REFLECT WHAT THEY SEE!

GOAL BANK

Use the *Healthy Habits Rx Pad* (https://bit.ly/healthy_habits_RxPad) to “prescribe” an agreed upon goal.
Encourage patients to track their progress (<https://www.habitbull.com/>)

CATEGORY	QUESTION(S) TO PROMPT CONVERSATION AND EXAMPLE GOALS
MOVEMENT & EXERCISE 	<i>What do you like to do for fun? What exercise is fun for you?</i> ☐ Stand up 5 times during each commercial break or after each episode when watching TV or tablet ☐ Replace one inactive family activity (TV/movie night) with a movement-based activity together once a week ☐ Go on a family walk for 20 minutes 3 times a week ☐ Practice a fun movement activity (jump rope, hopscotch, dancing) for 10 minutes each day for the next 3 weeks ☐ Attend a fitness class, team sport practice, or gym workout 3 times a week for the next 8 weeks
FOOD 	<i>What are some fruits and vegetables you like to eat?</i> ☐ Eat meals at the table without a screen or TV 4 days a week ☐ Replace one packaged or bagged snack with a fresh fruit or vegetable for one snack each day ☐ Eat at least one fruit or vegetable of every color in the rainbow 4 days a week ☐ Read food labels and consume less than 25 grams of sugar per day ☐ Eat only colorful vegetables as seconds at meals 4 days a week
BEVERAGE 	<i>What do you like to drink that contains low sugar? What do you like to drink during the day?</i> ☐ Replace one sugary drink with water once a day ☐ Opt out of refills of sweet tea or soda when eating out ☐ Bring a water bottle to school daily and finish at least one bottle each day for the next month ☐ Avoid sports drinks for 6 weeks (unless participating in ≥ 60 minutes per day of intense activity for the next 6 weeks) ☐ Choose water or unsweetened tea when eating take-out or at restaurants
SLEEP 	<i>Tell me about your sleep? What concerns do you have about your sleep? Do you have any trouble getting at least 8 hours of sleep at night?</i> ☐ Read for 15 minutes before bed instead of scrolling on a phone ☐ Turn off screens at least 1 hour before bedtime 5 nights a week for the next month ☐ Create a “Tech Free Zone” in the bedroom and remove electronics (e.g., charge phone, watch, computer in kitchen at night) ☐ Use an old-fashioned alarm clock instead of the cell phone to wake up ☐ Listen to music or a sound machine instead of watching a screen when going to sleep
SOMETHING ELSE 	<i>What’s your favorite thing to do? What do you enjoy doing? What makes you happy? What do you enjoy doing with your family?</i> ☐ Spend time in nature without looking at a screen ☐ Make my bed every morning for a month ☐ Take 3 deep breaths every morning ☐ Write down 3 things you are thankful for at the end of each day ☐ Dance to your favorite songs for 15 minutes every evening after dinner