

# KEYS TO BETTER HEALTH™

## Kids Heart Health

Over the past 30 years, obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents. Why is this cause for alarm? Obese youth are more likely to have high blood pressure or high cholesterol and are more likely to be obese as adults, putting them at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease<sup>1</sup>. The good news?

Prevention can be achieved with a few easy lifestyle tweaks, such as eating well, being active and reducing screen time.

### 1. Be Active

The American Heart Association® recommends all children two years of age or older engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. Increased amounts of physical activity, for both adults and children, has been associated with an increased life expectancy and decreased risk of developing cardiovascular disease<sup>2</sup>. If 60 minutes in one sitting seems impossible, try breaking it up into four-15 minute or two 30-minute segments. Do this by joining a community sports league, going for after dinner bike rides together as a family, or turning a walk in the park into a nature scavenger hunt.



### 2. Eat Well

The cornerstone of a healthful lifestyle is eating well. Give your family the fuel they need to succeed by making small changes to current eating habits. Try a meal makeover on family favorites by switching to whole grains, adding more vegetables, limiting sodium and sugar, and/or opting for lean sources of protein. Make nutritious snacks as enticing and convenient as possible. Do this by arranging a colorful fruit bowl on the counter, storing baggies of fresh cut vegetables

in the fridge, and stocking up on nutritious grab-and-go treats such as plain yogurt naturally sweetened with fruit or whole grain granola bars for convenience.

### 3. Reduce Screen Time

Screen time—time spent in front of a TV, video game console, computer, or cell phone—often contributes to a sedentary lifestyle and can lead to excessive, mindless snacking. For a healthful lifestyle, aim for no more than 1-2 hours of screen time per day. Considering that the average eight-year old spends eight hours per day using various forms of media<sup>3</sup>, it might be necessary to slowly transition to less screen time. Do this by scheduling free time for physical activity throughout the week, planning which TV shows your family will watch ahead of time for more structured viewing, and by limiting your own screen time to set a good example.

Keys to Better Health™ offers a nutrition shelf-edge labeling program, which makes it easy for you to quickly identify healthy choices regardless of what diet you follow. When you're in our store, be on the lookout for our nutrition tags

#### Resources:

1. Childhood Obesity Facts. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/obesity/facts.htm>. Updated August 27, 2015. Accessed August 10, 2016.
2. The AHA's Recommendations for Physical Activity in Children. American Heart Association website. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyKids/ActivitiesforKids/The-AHAs-Recommendations-for-Physical-Activity-in-Children\\_UCM\\_304053\\_Article.jsp#.V633G00rJD8](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyKids/ActivitiesforKids/The-AHAs-Recommendations-for-Physical-Activity-in-Children_UCM_304053_Article.jsp#.V633G00rJD8). Updated July 21, 2016. Accessed August 12, 2016.
3. Limit Screen Time and Get Your Kids (and the Whole Family) Moving. American Heart Association website. [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Limit-Screen-Time-and-Get-Your-Kids-and-the-Whole-Family-Moving\\_UCM\\_303813\\_Article.jsp#.V639fk0rJD9](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Limit-Screen-Time-and-Get-Your-Kids-and-the-Whole-Family-Moving_UCM_303813_Article.jsp#.V639fk0rJD9). Updated November 4, 2015. Accessed August 12, 2016.

