

## **Are Our Kids Getting Enough Exercise?**

A lot of attention has been placed on how the kids in today's society are becoming more inactive. The number of overweight kids has increased over the recent years as a result. There are many factors why they are not getting enough exercise. The more availability of cars instead of walking, watching too much TV, increasing use of computers, and video games are a few changes that are making our kids less active. The concern is when today's kids grow up what type of shape they will be in and what kind of medical problems they will have. By changing lifestyles when they are young can help them to be healthier in the future. Eating healthy and exercising routinely can increase the odds of being healthier in the future.

Exercise is often dreaded and put off until later if you have time. Many feel that you have to save a set amount of time and go to a gym and lift weights or use equipment to exercise, but in kids exercise is playing and just being physically active. Kids are actually exercising when they are in gym class at school, at recess, riding their bikes, playing tag, or just out on the driveway shooting baskets. Anything that gets them off their seats and moving around is exercise. There are many benefits when kids are active on a routine basis which include: stronger bones and muscles, less likely to be overweight, have a better outlook on life, sleep better, and are better able to handle the emotional challenges that they face. As fit kids get older, they are less likely to be overweight, have diabetes, have high blood pressure, or have elevated cholesterol.

Being fit involves three things which are endurance, strength, and flexibility. Endurance means that you can last longer when you exercise before wearing out. Endurance improves when you are regularly active, getting your heart rate faster and breathing harder. Over a period of time, this strengthens the heart and lungs allowing more oxygen to be delivered to your body. Strength means how strong the body is. You don't have to lift weights to become strong. Most activity done will help tone and strengthen the muscles. Simple activities like climbing, push-ups, pull-ups, doing handstands, sit-ups, squats, or just wrestling around with friends will do. Flexibility means how well and easily their joints and muscles move. Stretching is a good way to keep loose and maintain a full range of motion.

So how much exercise is enough in our kids. The Department of Health and Human Services state that children 2 years and older should exercise for 60 minutes every day. Remember that exercise in kids is just letting them be kids running and jumping around just like they naturally want to do. As parents we can help our kids by limiting how much TV and Video games, we allow them to watch and insisting they be active. We worry about our kid's health now, but why not help them stay fit so they will have better health when they are grown.