



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YMCA Offers Health Tips for Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

Northbrook, IL: September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, and the North Suburban YMCA wants families to understand how adopting healthy habits can reduce childhood obesity. While the dangers of childhood obesity are well known, many families need support in changing their families' habits in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The YMCA, a leading community-based organization dedicated to improving health, wants families to understand the risks of childhood obesity and to provide ways to reverse course through improved eating habits and increased physical activity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence of obesity has remained stable at about 17 percent and affects about 12.7 million children and adolescents. Obesity affects one in six children and one in three are overweight, which poses greater risks for many health problems such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and some cancers.

“Successfully lowering obesity rates in children requires the whole family to change their eating and physical activity habits,” notes Megan Vazquez, NSYMCA Wellness Director. “Kids learn unhealthy habits at home, and many parents or caregivers don’t realize how the choices they make affect those who look up to them. If families don’t know how to get started, reaching out to health care providers or supportive organizations like the Y are great first steps.”

The following tips are some great ways to incorporate healthier eating habits and more physical activity into your daily family routine:

Eat and Drink Healthy: Make water the drink of choice and encourage everyone to fill half their plates with fruits and vegetables by offering two or three colorful options at every meal. As a family, choose a new fruit and veggie every week to taste together. Place a full pitcher of water on the table during meals, and allow children to pour their own water.

Play Every Day/Go Outside: Children should have at least an hour a day of unstructured play outside (when possible) and break a sweat at least three times a week by getting 20 minutes or more of vigorous physical activity. Join your children in games that get your hearts pumping and bodies moving.

Eat Together: Eat as a family as frequently as possible. Involve kids in meal planning, preparation and clean up. In addition, adults should take a break from electronics and spend one-to-one time each day with their kids, enjoying one another’s company.

Reduce Recreational Screen Time: Time spent in front of televisions, computers, tablets, cell phones, or video games should be limited to two hours or less per day. Make a family plan to reduce screen time at

home (i.e. turn off screens during meals, go for a walk after a meal, set a timer to remind you to power down the screen).

Sleep Well: Kids and adults need to keep a regular sleep schedule; unwind together in the evenings by reading a book or listening to soft music to ensure the body is preparing for sleep. Kids are growing and need 10-12 hours of healthy sleep per night and seven to eight hours for adults.

Discover New Ways to Get Active: New sports, classes, and activities can inspire enthusiasm and motivation. The YMCA offers an enormous range of options, including swimming, sports, gymnastics, yoga, and dance classes to help kids find the best match for them. Another advantage: parents can exercise at the Y at the same time, modeling positive behavior while they improve their own health.

In addition to being healthy at home, there is a need to maintain healthy habits while attending out-of-school programs. To create healthy environments for all children the NSYMCA is implementing Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards in our before and after school programs. Our goal is to make the healthy choice the easy choice for your child while he or she is in our care.

To foster your child's health, the Y's staff members will:

- Only provide low-fat milk and water as beverages.
- Serve meals and snacks family-style.
- Set limits on screen time.
- Provide daily physical activity (outdoors when possible).
- Promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for infants.
- Model healthy food and beverage choices and active play.
- Provide parent/caregiver education to encourage healthy behaviors at home.

Fall program registration is currently open at the North Suburban YMCA, located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook. To learn more about the wellness programs for all ages at the Y, visit NSYMCA.org or contact Megan Vazquez, mvazquez@nsymca.org.



Photo Caption: Exercising as a family is a great way to inspire healthy habits for children that will last a lifetime.

About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)

The North Suburban YMCA serves 15 northern suburbs of Chicago, and for over 48 years has provided programs and services that address youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility every day. Working together for good is who we are: An association of people united in a common effort to help individuals become healthier, more connected, and confident. There is no other nonprofit quite like the Y: We have the national and local presence and partnerships to not just promise, but deliver, positive change, making sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For more information, visit NSYMCA.org.