

Visit the Web site at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> or call 1-866-35-WECAN for valuable materials. On the Web site, you can see the work of our partners, get the latest news, and learn how to become a **We Can! Community**.

The following We Can! materials are now available:

- **We Can! Energize Our Community Toolkit for Action** This toolkit gives community planners a one-stop shop of planning tools, reproducible materials, and media materials to implement **We Can!** in communities across the country. The curriculum for parents contained in the toolkit is a 6-week course to help parents learn some simple ways to encourage a healthy weight in their family.
- **We Can! Families Finding the Balance: A Parent Handbook**, in English and Spanish, offers practical tips to help parents help their families find the right balance of eating well and being physically active to maintain a healthy weight.
- **We Can!** poster, Who can make **it** happen?
- **We Can!** wristbands for adults and youth.

Information on obtaining curricula for community groups to use with youth is also available.



The **We Can!** Web site also links you to valuable resources from our partnering Institutes: NICHD, NIDDK and NCI. Learn more about NICHD's Media Smart Youth and Milk Matters campaign, while NIDDK's Weight-control Information Network has a number of available products.

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Who can
make **it**
happen?



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
National Cancer Institute

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We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) is a new public education program designed to help children 8–13 years old stay at a healthy weight through improving food choices, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time. The program is a collaboration of four Institutes of the National Institutes of Health (NIH): the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and National Cancer Institute (NCI).

We Can! is unique because it focuses on parents and families in home and community settings. Research shows that parents and families have a big impact on shaping the behavior of children. They can do much to help children maintain a healthy weight and prevent overweight. **We Can!** is harnessing that power through:

- Programs in local communities throughout the country
- Partnerships with other national organizations that care about children and their health
- Resources, activities and tips for parents and caregivers (<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>)

Why Should We Care About Our Weight?

Everybody seems to be talking about overweight and obesity and what to do about it. As a nation we've been steadily getting heavier. According to 2002 national data about 65 percent of adult Americans are now overweight or obese. And, 16 percent of children and teens are overweight. Children have been getting heavier. The percentage of children and teens who are overweight has doubled since the 1970s.



What Can My Family and I Do to Encourage a Healthy Weight?

Encouraging your family to maintain a healthy weight is one of the most important things a parent or caregiver can do. The two things you can do right away are make smart food choices and encourage more physical activity. And, the **We Can!** program is here to help...**We Can!** provides you with lots of ideas that can help you and your family get started.

Energy Balance: The Heart of the Matter

Becoming overweight doesn't happen over night. It develops over time when the energy we take IN by eating and drinking (calories) is not in balance with the energy we burn OUT from physical activity and daily activities.

Energy IN: Focusing on Food Choices and Portion Size

Calories do count, no matter what kind of food or drink they come from. The trick to controlling energy IN is to:

- Choose foods that are low or moderate in calories.
- Enjoy small portions at home and at restaurants.

One way to control energy IN is to think about food choices in terms of GO, SLOW, and WHOA foods:

GO are the lowest in fat and added sugar. They are rich in nutrients and relatively low in calories. Enjoy GO foods almost anytime.

SLOW are higher in fat, added sugar, and calories than GO foods. Have SLOW foods sometimes, at most several times a week.

WHOA are highest in fat and added sugar. They are high in calories, and many are low in nutrients. Have WHOA foods only once in a while or on special occasions. And, when you do have them, have small portions.

Energy OUT: Physical Activity and Screen Time

Most of us aren't very physically active. We sit a lot and spend hours in front of TVs, video games, and computers. Children too are sedentary and not as active as they should be. We need to encourage children to get 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity on most days. We need to discourage sedentary time and limit screen time to 2 hours or less.

TIPS

Here are a few small things that you and your family can do to get energy IN and energy OUT in balance. Give them a try!

Energy IN

- Choose food portions no larger than your fist.
- Choose a checkout line without a candy display.
- Give the entire family a low-fat, high-fiber breakfast—it may help keep hunger pangs away longer.
- Put fruit slices and cut-up veggies out as snacks instead of chips and cookies.

Energy OUT

- Go on a family bike ride or hike.
- Buy a set of hand weights and play a round of Simon Says with your children—you do the weights, they do it without.
- Choose "labor-spending" devices instead of "labor-savings" devices: wash the car by hand with your children instead of going through the automatic car wash.
- Garden with your family—cutting the lawn, pulling the weeds, or raking the leaves can be family time.

Check out the **We Can!** Web site for a chart on GO, SLOW, and WHOA foods, and for more tips on energy balance, <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>.