

## The CHILD Diet

Obesity and increased cholesterol are linked to heart disease later in life. The **CHILD Diet** (Cardiovascular Health Integrated Lifestyle Diet) is focused on improving the health of children with these conditions. The CHILD Diet emphasizes a few key points:

- Limits on the amount of fat in the diet
  - 25-35% of calories come from fat
  - 8-10% of calories come from saturated fat
  - 20% of calories come from mono- and poly-unsaturated fat
  - Avoid trans fats as much as possible
  - Cholesterol <300mg per day
- Enough fiber (age in years plus 5 up to 14g per day)
- Limits on the amount of juice: 4 ounces per day- 100% fruit juice only
- Fat free milk only

There are two methods to monitor dietary fat. (1) You may look for food labels that show less than 20% of calories from fat, or (2) you may add up the grams of fat eaten daily (more difficult to do-see example below). Either way, reading food labels will be essential.

Method 1: Try using the “5 & 20 rule”: If the percent daily value for fat is 5% or less, that food is a low fat choice. If the percent daily value for fat is 20% or higher, it is a high fat choice and should be consumed less often.

Method 2: Calculating grams of fat is confusing, so here is an example. A 2,000 calorie diet should have about 30% of calories from fat, or about 600 calories from fat. Since there are 9 calories per gram of fat, a 2000-calorie diet should have a maximum of about 66 grams of fat per day. Here are some other examples:

<u>Calories per day</u>	<u>Grams of Fat per Day</u>
1,200	40
1,500	50
1,700	56
2,000	66

Since the body can convert saturated fat to cholesterol, no more than 1/3 of the fat eaten should be saturated fat. (Saturated fat usually comes from animals or tropical fruits). In addition, the maximum daily cholesterol intake should be 300mg. This is sometimes called a CHILD 1 Diet. (The CHILD 2 Diet has further restrictions on fat intake.)

A consultation with a registered dietitian can be very helpful and is highly recommended. Call Hunterdon’s Center for Nutrition and Diabetes Management at 908-237-6920 for an appointment. Your consultation with your dietitian will provide detailed resources for guiding your shopping, menu planning, and food preparation. In addition, you will have an opportunity to review your family’s diet and specific areas where you might make changes. Even small changes add up and are worth making.

We recommend that you modify your menus for your entire family and do not single out members with obesity or high cholesterol. These heart-healthy ways of eating are good for everyone!

It's also important to remember that managing obesity or increased cholesterol is a long-term issue. A gradual change in diet is better accepted. (For example, change whole milk to 2% milk for a while, then to fat free). When children become accustomed to heart-healthy diets early on, they are more likely to continue those habits long term.

**Here are some general recommendations to help you get started.**

It's okay to flavor fat free milk to entice a child to drink milk instead of juice or other sweetened beverages. Gradually remove the added flavoring over time.

Use the My Plate method for portion sizes: cover half of the plate with fruits and vegetables, ¼ with protein and ¼ with starch. Visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

**Foods to avoid/limit**

**Foods to Choose Instead**

Fatty cuts of meat

Lean meats (no visible fat) or fish (3 oz=one serving, the size of a deck of cards; max 4-6 oz/day)

Poultry skin

Skinless chicken or turkey

Butter

Tub or spray margarine (trans-fat free)

Ice cream

Frozen yogurt

Deep fried foods

Broiled or grilled foods. Let fat drip away when baking or roasting.

Processed luncheon meats (salami, ham, pepperoni)

Turkey breast

Eggs (limit to 3 yolks/week)

Egg substitutes such as "Egg Beaters"

Cooking oil

Cooking spray/unsaturated oil

Whole, 2% or 1% milk

Fat free (skim) milk

High fat cheese/sour cream/  
Cream cheese

Reduced or non fat sour cream, cheese or cream cheese (no more than 6 gm fat/oz)

Mayonnaise

Fat-free substitute

Salad dressing

Fat-free substitute

High-fat crackers/cookies

Low-fat crackers/cookies

**Exercise** that raises heart rate for 30 minutes per day is also essential. See *Promoting Physical Activity*.