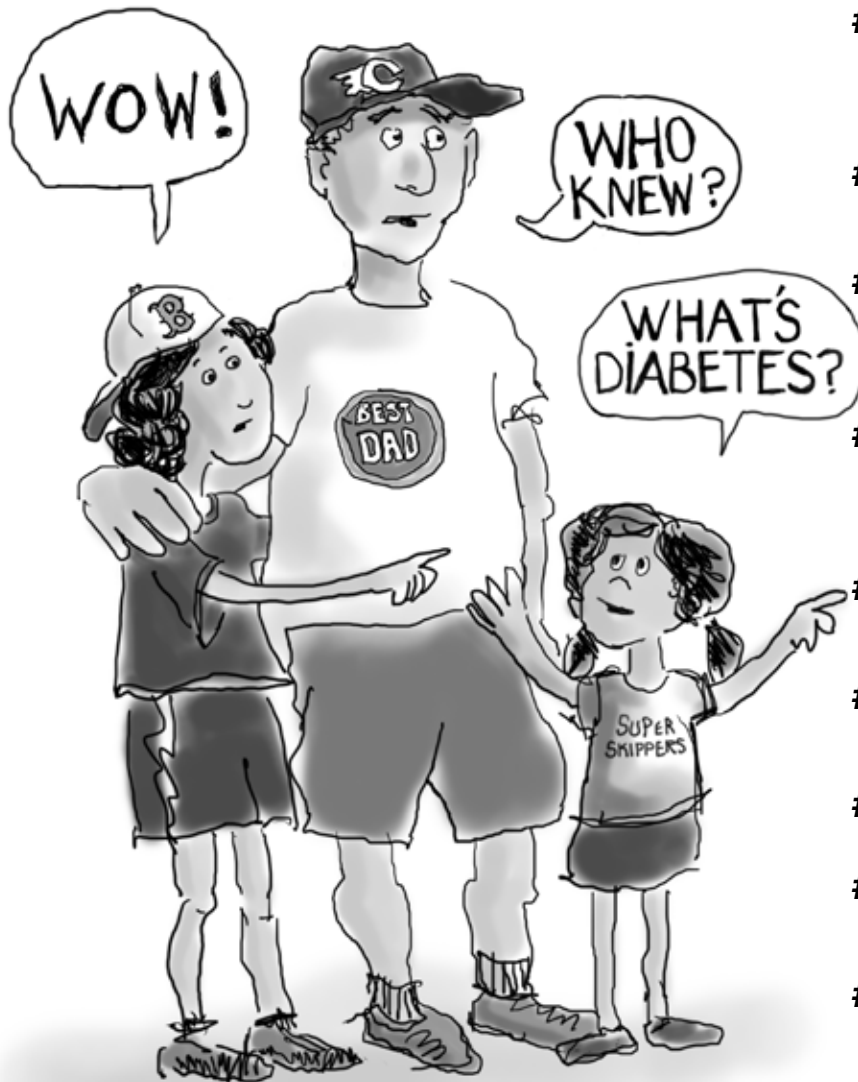


# 10

really good reasons **EXERCISE** is important for your child...



- #1 Exercise helps kids **build self-esteem** and **confidence!**
- #2 Exercise acts like “**Brain Fertilizer**” to keep kids’ brains healthy so they can **think better!**
- #3 Exercise helps kids **avoid anxiety** and **depression!**
- #4 Exercise teaches kids to **be more active**, instead of just sitting around watching TV and whining.
- #5 Exercise helps kids tune up their **coordination** and keep their bodies **working smoothly!**
- #6 Exercise helps kids **avoid deadly diseases** like **diabetes.**
- #7 Exercise helps kids build **healthy hearts!**
- #8 Exercise helps **build strong bones!**
- #9 Exercise helps kids **build strong muscles!**
- #10 Exercise helps kids set and reach **goals** — and **be winners** in life!

...and how **BICYCLING** and **WALKING** can help your child grow up healthy and strong!



Active  
Living **RESOURCE**  
CENTER

# 3 WAYS THAT BICYCLING AND WALKING CAN HELP YOUR CHILD KEEP FIT

## #1: BY MAKING EXERCISE A REGULAR PART OF YOUR CHILD'S LIFE

If your child walks or bikes to school, to visit friends, to play in the park, or to go to the store, that's regular exercise!

*If your child exercises for 30 minutes every day, it adds up quickly!*



## #2: BY EMPHASIZING LOW-IMPACT EXERCISE



Bicycling and walking are easy on your child's body. It's hard to pull a muscle bicycling or ruin a knee walking.

*With a well-adjusted bike and helmet, good walking or running shoes, and some basic safety tips, your child is ready for action!*

## #3: BY EXPANDING YOUR CHILD'S WORLD

Kids who get driven everywhere in a car see the world go by in a blur. They don't have a connection with the places they pass through and may not even know how to get to their favorite destinations on their own.

*Kids who walk and bike learn where playgrounds, ice cream shops, and basketball courts are — and how to get to them!*



## HOT TIPS!

■ Daily exercise means starting a healthy new habit. And habits take some time to get established.



*Get in the habit of walking and biking with your kids for a month or two and you'll miss it if you stop! (And so will they!)*

■ Exercise — even moderate exercise — within 2 hours of bedtime can improve sleep.



*A nice walk or bike ride around the neighborhood with your kids can help get them ready for a good night's sleep.*

■ Many cities and towns have bike racks on their buses. You can ride to a nearby bus stop and when the bus comes, load your bike on the rack and go!



*Call the bus company right now and ask how you can take your bikes along!*

## MORE HOT TIPS!

■ Almost every town has groups devoted to fun and exercise AND that cater to families and kids.



*Your local YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, or PTA might help you start a neighborhood walk/bike club!*

■ Some walkers count their steps with clip-on pedometers. And bicyclists can keep track of mileage with a cyclometer.



*For walkers, some cities have "Free Pedometer" programs. Ask if your local health department has one!*

■ It's good to mix different kinds of exercises for a well-rounded workout. Walking and basketball, bicycling and soccer, for example.



*Encourage your kids to walk or bike to the basketball court or football or soccer practice!*

# 3 WAYS TO FIT WALKING AND BIKING INTO YOUR FAMILY'S BUSY LIFE

## #1: GOING SOMEWHERE WITH YOUR KIDS?

Could you take this trip on foot or on bike? Yes? Well, get moving!

Really need the car? Drive part of the way and then walk or bike the rest. Is there a closer place you could go to do your errand? Why not go there instead?

*Remember: Riding in a car means sitting in a car. Kids — and their parents — do way too much sitting already!*



## #2: GOING SOMEWHERE WITHOUT THE KIDS?



Will you hire a sitter (to sit, of course)?

Talk to other parents and set up a neighborhood walking and biking club! Parents could take turns going for walks or bike rides with the kids after school or in the evening.

*Getting to know your neighbors and doing fun*

*stuff with them is a great way to make your community safer! People will know — and watch out for — each others' kids.*

## #3: WHY NOT EXPLORE WITH YOUR KIDS?



How well do you know your neighborhood? Do you know the folks across the street? How about on the next block? Is there a park nearby — or a grocery store or theater?

*Many people drive right past wonderful places to explore. Like what? How about a small, family-owned candy store? Or a park where folks play music? Or a plaza where people play dominoes in the shade of a big tree? You won't know what you'll find until you go exploring!*

# THE STAKES ARE HIGH!

## CONSIDER THESE TWO SOBERING FACTS:

1. Overweight kids — as young as six years old — show some of the early signs of heart disease.
2. “Adult onset” diabetes, formerly an adult disease, is now so common among kids that doctors now call it “Type 2 Diabetes.”



# The “RAISING HEALTHY KIDS” Pledge

Fill out this handy form for each child and stick it on the refrigerator for all to see!

Starting: \_\_\_\_\_, I will make sure \_\_\_\_\_ gets exercise by:  
(date) (child's name)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(what you and your child will do) (how often) (how many minutes)

I will also limit TV and video game time\* at home to \_\_\_\_\_  
(hours per day)

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(your name) (date)

\*The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that school-age kids be exposed to TV, videos, or computer games for no more than 2 hours per day.

TAPE YOUR  
CHILD'S  
PHOTO HERE  
AS A  
REMINDER  
OF WHAT'S  
AT STAKE!

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Kids don't just naturally know how to bicycle and walk safely. You must teach them important lessons. Very young kids shouldn't go on their own. Older kids may after they learn some basics and earn your confidence.

### BICYCLING BASICS:

1. Stick to quiet streets and ride on the right, with traffic.
2. Obey traffic signs and signals and signal turns.
3. No riding after dark without lights AND reflectors.
4. Wear an approved bike helmet.
5. At busy intersections, walk across in the crosswalk.

Get a copy of “Bicycle Safety: What Every Parent Should know” here:

[www.activelivingresources.org/assets/bikesafety.pdf](http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/bikesafety.pdf)

### WALKING BASICS:

1. Walk on the sidewalk. No sidewalk? Walk facing traffic as far from the cars as is safe.
2. Obey traffic signs and signals.
3. Cross streets at intersections or at marked crosswalks.
4. Look left, right, left for traffic before crossing AND wait until it's clear.
5. After dark, wear reflective clothing, arm bands, and backpacks and carry a bright flashlight.

Walking safely: [www.activelivingresources.org/assets/checkroute.pdf](http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/checkroute.pdf)

This brochure was developed by the Active Living Resource Center, a program supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Additional materials for child education and making your neighborhood more bicycle friendly and walkable are available through the ALRC at:

[www.activelivingresources.org](http://www.activelivingresources.org).



Logos etc go here

For more on safety topics, go to:  
[www.activelivingresources.org/assets/saferoute.pdf](http://www.activelivingresources.org/assets/saferoute.pdf)

Author **John Williams**, of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking, has worked in bike safety for over 35 years. Special thanks go to **Linda Tracy** for her tireless help with research and review on this project.

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