

Cut the Fat: The Battle Against Childhood Obesity

(CARLSBAD, CA) – May is National Fitness Month. And if there was ever a time to leave our couch potato culture behind and get moving, it's now. Our children's lives are depending on it!

The obesity epidemic is wreaking havoc on our children's health. Obesity rates have doubled among children in the past 20 years, and tripled in teens. At the current time, a whopping one-third of American children are overweight, and one-fifth are clinically obese.

Obese children are twice as likely as children of normal weights to suffer from type-2 diabetes. According to the American Heart Association, obese children at the young age of ten have arteries that resemble those of 45-year-olds as well as enlargement of the left atrium region of the heart, a risk factor for both heart disease and stroke.

With all of the health problems that go alongside obesity, our current generation of children may be the first in modern history with a lifespan shorter than that of their parents.

Fortunately, just a few daily lifestyle changes can get kids moving and combat childhood obesity. Judi Sheppard Missett, Founder and CEO of Jazzercise, Inc, gives these suggestions:

- **Lead by example.** Be a role model. If you are moving and exercising, then your kids will do the same. Take a bike ride after dinnertime or join a family-friendly fitness facility.
- **Be positive.** Focus on your child's strengths. Find a physical activity that your child enjoys. Don't worry about getting huge results on the scale right away. Just emphasize the importance of changing your child's daily behaviors, and the results will come.
- **Start early.** Teach your children to eat healthier foods in appropriate portion sizes and to limit sedentary activity from the start. It's more likely that they will maintain this healthy lifestyle as they grow.
- **Teach nutrition.** The old adage that a child should clean his plate because there are starving people in other parts of the world is misguided. Your child's intake of a full plate won't fix world hunger. Instead, teach your children about portion sizes and how to recognize when they are full.
- **Guzzle it up.** Replace your children's sugary beverages with water. American children and teens drink an average of 235 "empty" calories from sugar-sweetened beverages every day. That adds up to nearly 25 pounds per year!
- **Limit your kids screen time.** Set a maximum time limit each day for both television and Internet usage.
- **Enlist the help of your community.** Talk to your child's school about what health curricula is being offered. Volunteer with the PTA and see what healthy activities you and other parents can bring to your children's school day.

Jazzercise, created by Judi Sheppard Missett, is the world's leading dance-fitness program with more than 7,500 instructors teaching 32,000 classes weekly in the U.S. and around the globe. Since 1969, millions of people of all ages and fitness levels have reaped the benefits of this comprehensive program, designed to enhance cardiovascular endurance, strength, and flexibility. For more information on Jazzercise go to jazzercise.com or call (800)FIT-IS-IT or (760)476-1750.

###

Courtesy of Jazzercise, Inc. - jazzercise.com