

Protect Your Child from Chronic Disease

Children who are physically inactive or overweight are at greater risk of developing a chronic illness.

By eating a balanced, healthy diet and exercising regularly, parents can improve their own health, set a positive example for their children, and help to protect their children from developing chronic illnesses.

Chronic disease is the leading cause of avoidable death, health care utilization, and premature death in Canada.

Most chronic illnesses can be prevented by controlling and reducing some of the modifiable risk factors in our own lives.

Avoidable risk factors for chronic disease

- physical inactivity
- high cholesterol
- being overweight
- having an unhealthy diet
- smoking
- excessive alcohol consumption
- high blood pressure

What can parents do?

1. Ask your doctor to measure your child's weight, height, and blood pressure at routine health visits
2. Encourage healthy eating and provide healthy foods for your child



3. Help ensure your child eats the daily recommended 5 to 10 servings of fruit and vegetables, 5 to 12 servings of whole grains, and an adequate amounts of dietary fibre each day
4. Eat and serve a wide variety of foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol
5. Limit saturated fatty acids to less than 10% of the total calories in the food you provide
6. Limit the total fat intake in the food your family consumes to 20 to 30% of the total calories
7. Limit your family members' cholesterol intake to less than 300mg per day
8. Ensure your child gets at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day
9. Increase your daily physical activity and decrease inactivity
10. Walk more often and drive less often

500,000 British Columbians suffer from one or more chronic illness. Nationally, 16,000,000 Canadians live with chronic illness.

About 67% of the total direct health care costs in Canada are spent on treating chronic illnesses.

Major chronic diseases in Canada

- heart disease
- cancer
- diabetes
- hypertension
- asthma
- chronic lung disease
- liver disease



- arthritis
- mental illness