Prevention of Child Obesity: Evidence Based Guidance and Expert Opinion

1. Pre-conception to Postpartum
   a. **Promote Physical Activity prior to and during early pregnancy**
      i. Goal = Reduce incidence of GDM (OR 0.45).
   b. **Avoid smoking in pregnancy** (OR 1.52-2.22)
   c. **Prevent Excess Weight Gain in pregnancy**
      i. Weight gain of >24kg (48 lbs) vs. 8-10 kg (17.6-22 lbs) - OR 226 for baby weighing >4kg at term (macrosomia)
   d. **Detect and Treat Gestational DM** (OR 1.8-1.9 untreated GDM vs. 1.3-1.38 treated GDM).

2. Infancy and beyond
   a. **Recommend breastfeeding for at least six months** (OR 0.78; 95%CI 0.71–0.85)
      i. A dose-dependent effect of breastfeeding duration notes incremental improvements in OR with increased duration of breastfeeding.
   b. **Avoid premature introduction of solids**—wait until developmentally ready (about 6 mo).
      i. Give 10 tries with each new food to help baby learn to like a wide variety.
   c. **Avoid overfeeding/preserve natural satiety** by respecting a child’s appetite.
      i. Recognize signs of fullness/satiety from early infancy.
      ii. Allow young child to self-regulate food intake; Teach child to recognize fullness.
      iii. Eat slower—children who eat for >30 min have less obesity than kids who eat faster.
   d. **Promote nutrient-rich foods and healthy dietary patterns:**
      i. Teach parents about portion sizes (size of child’s fist).
      ii. Recommend a diet balanced with energy from carbohydrates, protein, and fats.
      iii. Recommend 5-9 servings of fruits and veggies daily.
      iv. Recommend diet high in fiber, such as from whole grains.
      v. Recommend low fat milk (1%) after age 2.
      vi. Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages such as soda and <100% juice drinks.
         1. Limit 100% juice to <6 oz per day.
      vii. Eat breakfast every day.
      viii. Eat structured meals at home, and limit eating out.
      ix. Avoid calorie-dense or nutrient poor snacks, and caution against mindless eating.
      x. Avoid food rewards.
         1. Promote ways to cope with emotions that do not include eating.
   e. **Recommend physical activity**—
      i. Free, safe movement for infants.
      ii. Active unstructured play for toddlers and preschoolers.
      iii. Promote 60 min or more daily of vigorous age-appropriate activity.
   f. **Limit TV or computer screen time**
      i. None under age 2.
      ii. <2 hours/day if over age 2.
      iii. No TV in sleeping areas.
References:


- AHQR Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research published two relevant guidelines regarding childhood obesity searched 8/27/13 which are referenced as follows: