

**Dear Parents:**

At the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation, we understand it can be challenging to find that special family time when you can eat as a family or find a physical activity the entire family can do together.

Our Together Counts™ campaign helps families lead healthy and active lives, articulating the advantages of family meals and healthy activities. In addition, we have engaged a number of partners who are providing easy tips for how you can incorporate family centered activities into your hectic day.

As a working mom, I understand the challenges. I look forward to working together so that we can help you make family time count.

Best regards,

Lisa Gable  
President  
Healthy Weight  
Commitment Foundation



**Our Mission:**

Our mission is to provide simple and fun ways to get active and healthy together; to create a lively community where families can unite to share positive steps with one another and where teachers can educate children about the importance of energy balance on a platform fostering a commitment to healthy active lifestyles through tools, resources and a Together Counts™ message.



**TOGETHER COUNTS** is a powerful movement encouraging us all to eat and be active together. Families across the nation are joining the movement by taking a pledge to practice Energy Balance for a healthy, active lifestyle.

**Together Counts™**  
A National Program  
to Inspire Active  
Healthy Living and  
Energy Balance

Help spread  
the word!



**TOGETHER  
COUNTS**



We thrive together

**Challenge  
your family  
and friends.**

**Together Counts™**  
A National Program  
to Inspire Active  
Healthy Living and  
Energy Balance

**Take the Pledge!**  
[TogetherCounts.com](http://TogetherCounts.com)

# What is Energy Balance?

Simply speaking, it is the balance of calories consumed from foods and beverages (energy In) with calories burned from physical activity (like walking or playing), activities of daily living (like getting dressed, eating or reading) and basic body processes, like thinking and sleeping (energy out). When we maintain energy balance over time, it can contribute to our health in positive ways.

## Balancing Energy In and Energy Out:

Our energy in and our energy out don't have to balance exactly every day, but our goal should be to maintain balance over time. Energy balance in children occurs when the amount of energy in and energy out supports normal growth and development without promoting excess weight gain. In other words, children need to gain some weight as part of their normal growth, so an exact 1:1 ratio of energy in and energy out is not the goal. It is important for them to understand the concept of balancing their daily calorie requirements with regular physical activity, and why it is so important.

### Active Healthy Lifestyle:

Maintaining a balance of our energy in and energy out contributes to a healthy lifestyle in many ways. Adults often focus on weight gain or loss. (If we consume more calories than we burn, we gain weight. If we burn more calories than we consume, we lose weight). For children, however, the focus should also be about having enough energy to do all the things they want to do and grow up strong and healthy; to practice balance, variety and moderation in their diet; and to be physically active for 60 minutes each day.

Learn more at [TogetherCounts.com](http://TogetherCounts.com)

## Is Your Body In Balance?

No, we're not asking whether you can stand on one foot! We're asking whether you "balance" the amount of food you take in with the amount you burn off.

When you eat just the right amount of food for your body to work right and for you to move around, your body will be a healthy size and you'll look and feel good. That means you're doing a good job of balancing the amount of food you eat with the amount you burn off.

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TOGETHER  
COUNTS



We thrive together



## 5 Simple Energy Balance Tips

By Ellen Sviland, MS, RD, LD, CNSD

Energy Balance is a simple equation that can change your child's life. It's also the source of some serious concern for parents. All busy parents, worry about making choices that are right for their children. Ensuring that kids are active and healthy does not need to be a struggle for parents. Modifying your lifestyle to include small 'balancing' changes will help your whole family develop life-long habits and enable them to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Get started today with these fun and simple ideas to make energy balance a part of your daily life.

### 1. Make just one dietary change at a time

Dietitians recommend making one change at a time. Try adding one serving of fruits and vegetables each week.

### 2. Make physical activity fun

Buy inexpensive pedometers and track how much each family member walks in a weekend.

### 3. Be a role model for good health

Children mimic the behavior habits of their parents. Show kids that regular exercise and eating healthfully makes you feel good, is fun, and is part of your regular daily routine.

### 4. Make breakfast count

A morning meal that includes whole grains, protein, and fiber provides children with energy for learning, exercise, and other daily activities.

### 5. Your feet were made for walking

Fitness experts say grown ups and kids should take at least 10,000 steps every day. So take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk your dog, do a little dance, park a little farther away- every step counts! Lots of small steps add up to one big leap.

Get many more tips at [TogetherCounts.com](http://TogetherCounts.com)

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