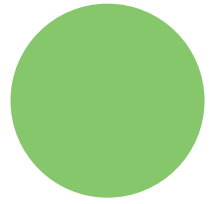
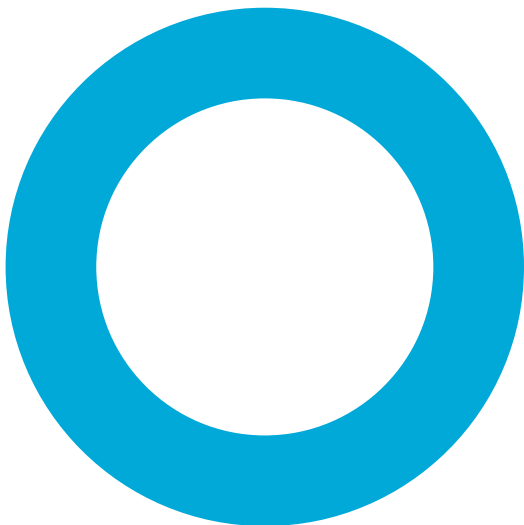


All Kids Healthy



# SELF-COACHING GUIDE

A resource for families and individuals to  
change health behaviors and create healthy  
habits for a lifetime.



**Blank Children's Hospital**  
**UnityPoint Health**

*A department of UnityPoint Health - Des Moines - Iowa Methodist Medical Center*

## BLANK CHILDREN'S HEALTHY KIDS PROGRAM

### Our Mission

The Healthy Kids Program aims to help all children live healthy lifestyles by providing education and programming for children, parents, educators, child care providers and health care providers with a goal of preventing and treating elevated Body Mass Index (BMI) and associated diseases such as Type II diabetes.

### Our Approach

The Healthy Kids Program is tackling its mission by combining efforts across three areas:

- Outreach-All Kids Healthy
- Research
- Treatment

All Kids Healthy...  
because ALL kids deserve to be healthy!

## WELCOME TO THE ALL KIDS HEALTHY SELF-COACHING GUIDE!

This resource will help you figure out what changes you want to make to you and your family's habits to improve your health outcomes. Many times parents and caregivers come to a place of wanting to make changes feeling guilty about not making them sooner or letting it get to the point where they or their kids are having health problems.

This is not the place for guilt! Everyone has their own unique circumstances that they are facing and everyone wants what's best for their family. Additionally, there is no one goal or path that is right for everyone. Some families may feel like they have a good handle on nutrition, but need help with physical activity. Other families may be trying to figure out how to get more sleep for their kids. We are here to help!



## WHY MAKE CHANGES?

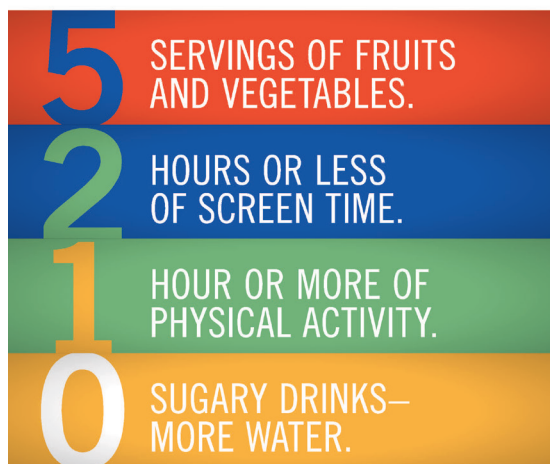
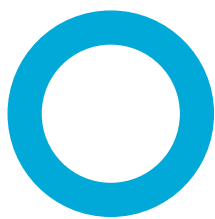
One thing caregivers ask is “Why is it important to make these changes?”

There are **many benefits** that come from eating fruits and vegetables, getting physical activity every day, and getting more sleep as well as reducing screen time. **Improved attention** at school and work, **increased energy**, and **stronger immune systems** are just a few of the benefits that we see from making small changes in these areas. Additionally, we are seeing more and more children under the age of 18 with high cholesterol, glucose, insulin, and liver enzymes. This can lead to Type 2 Diabetes, heart problems, and even liver problems that can last into adulthood.

Getting a head-start on improved health habits can not only help **prevent illness** now, but also later in life. Even if you have a child with some of these medical concerns, making changes now can make big improvements in those lab values and may even reduce some of the risks of further complications. Keep in mind that it is not only children with elevated Body Mass Index that may have these concerns. Children with a Body Mass Index in a “normal” range can still have elevated lab values while children who do fall into the higher range of Body Mass Index can have perfectly normal values. The important part is making **healthy choices** that will take you through your life as healthy as you can be!

## WHERE TO START?

There are so many areas to focus on that deciding where to start can be overwhelming. You don't have to tackle everything at once! **Pick one area** you would like to make changes in and **start small**. Use 5210 as a guide to find an area to focus on. Be sure to involve everyone in the household who will be a part of the change. When kids get to be a part of the process of deciding which areas to work on, they are more likely to take ownership of the goal and make progress toward it. Some places to start are listed below.



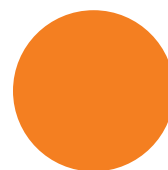
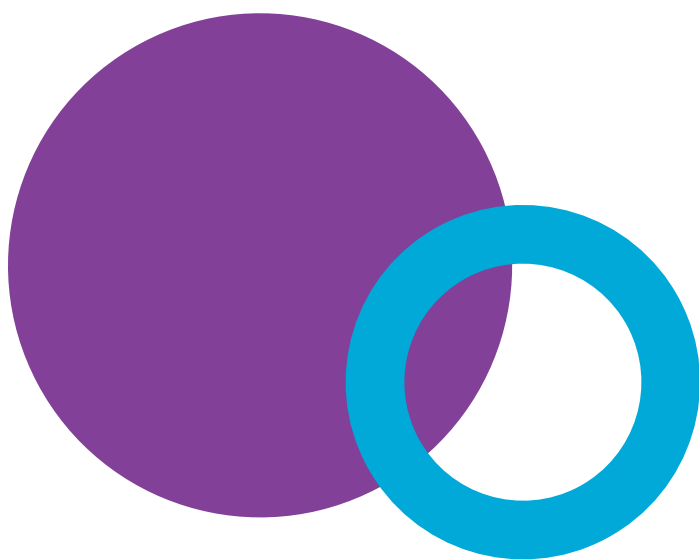
- Increase fruit and veggies.
- Increase physical activity.
- Decrease sugary drinks and foods.
- Decrease screen time.
- Improve sleep.

Once you decide on a **general topic**, you can start **narrowing down** what you are going to do in that area.

## STARTING CHANGE AND SETTING GOALS

Now that you have picked a general area to work on, it's time to get into the details. **Remember to start small!** For example, maybe you decide that your family needs more vegetables. Research has shown that getting 5 servings of fruits and veggies everyday can have big health benefits. This could be 3 veggies and 2 fruits or some other combination. Take a look at your baseline: How many veggies does your family eat in a day right now? Maybe it's only 1 and sometimes none.

One place to start would be to **set a goal** of eating one vegetable every day. Make a list with your family of vegetables they like and ones that they don't like and even vegetables that they have never tried. Maybe everyone likes carrots. Maybe only one person likes green beans. Maybe everyone says they don't like zucchini, but the truth is that they have never actually tried it.

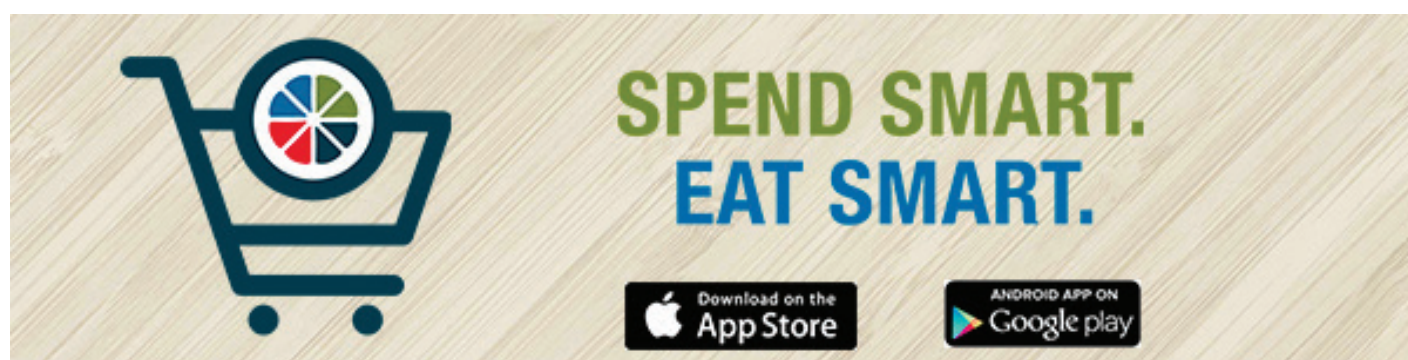


## EXAMPLE

Get out a notebook or calendar. Write down which vegetables you want to try each day of the week and what meals you want to try them at. Since you know everyone likes carrots, put that in 2-3 times. Put in green beans once. Put in zucchini once. Fill in the rest of the days with other veggies your family likes. Try to stick to only trying one new thing a week. If it's a food that only one or two people like, put it on the list and encourage everyone who says they don't like it to try at least a few bites of it.

Next, look for recipes. You may have some that you already like and know how to make. You may need to find a new one for the veggie that not everyone likes or the new veggie you are all trying. Sometimes, we just need to find a way to prepare the food. Some people may like cooked carrots, while others may only eat them raw. A good resource to help with learning how to prepare fruits and vegetables as well as offering a variety of recipes is the Spend Smart, Eat Smart website and mobile app from Iowa State Extension.

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>



Now that you know which veggies you are eating on which days and at what meals and have recipes for them, you just need to be sure to get them at the grocery store or farmers' market. If possible, involve the kids in making the vegetable. Kids are more likely to try something if they are able to help make it.

This process can also be used for things like increasing physical activity, getting more sleep, or any other goal. The key is to start small and build. Keeping track of your progress on a tracking form can be helpful. A simple goal tracking sheet is available at the end of this guide.

### Steps to Setting a Health Goal

1. Decide what area you want to focus on.
2. Set a small, goal that is achievable. Use the SMART goal process on the next page.
3. Get specific about the who, what, where, when, and how.
4. Keep track of your progress on a goal-tracking sheet.





# SETTING SMART GOALS

Setting goals is one of the keys to changing habits. Using a SMART goal format helps you create a plan to help you get to where you want to be.



**SPECIFIC** State what it is that you want to accomplish, how you will do it, and other details such as when and where. Specific means that you are going to look at all of the aspects of the goal and clearly identify them so you know exactly what you plan to do.



**MEASURABLE** This step usually involves a number such as how many servings, number of minutes, or number of days a week.



**ATTAINABLE** Ask yourself if this goal is something you can actually do given your abilities, financial situation, or time constraints. Setting a goal to run on the treadmill doesn't mean anything if you don't have access to a treadmill.



**RELEVANT** Does this goal mean something to me? Is it worth my time? How will achieving this improve my life? R can also stand for Realistic. Sometimes we set goals that are really big or don't take into consideration certain barriers that we cannot get around. If you aren't doing any exercise right now, is it realistic to set a goal of doing an hour of physical activity every day of the week? It might be. Or it might be too much to start with. Maybe a more realistic goal is doing 20 minutes of physical activity three days a week and working up to an hour and more days.



**TIME-BOUND** This last step can give you a deadline or frame of reference for when you are going to work on your goal or plan to have it done by.

## Example:

- I will eat one serving (1/2 cup) of vegetables three days in the next week at dinnertime.
- I will walk five days a week for 30 minutes after school.

You can further break down your goal to which days, types of vegetable, or any other specific detail that will help you accomplish your goal. While you don't want to make your goals too complicated, you also want enough detail to make it easy to know what to do.

After you have your goal set, ask yourself these questions to help you determine if you are going to need a little more motivation or help with your goal or if you think you've got it down and are ready to tackle it.

- How important is this goal to you on a scale from 0-10?
- How confident are you that you can achieve this goal?



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## EXPANDING YOUR GOALS

Work on your first goal for a couple of weeks until it starts to become more routine. When you feel comfortable with your progress, you can **start expanding to reach your bigger goal**. In our vegetable example, you may decide to add in a second vegetable, but maybe only 3 days a week. Use the same process to decide what, when, where, and how you will work toward this goal. After a week or two of working on this goal, increase to 4-5 days and then to 6-7 days. This gradual process will allow you to experience success without overwhelming you with too much too soon.

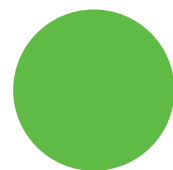
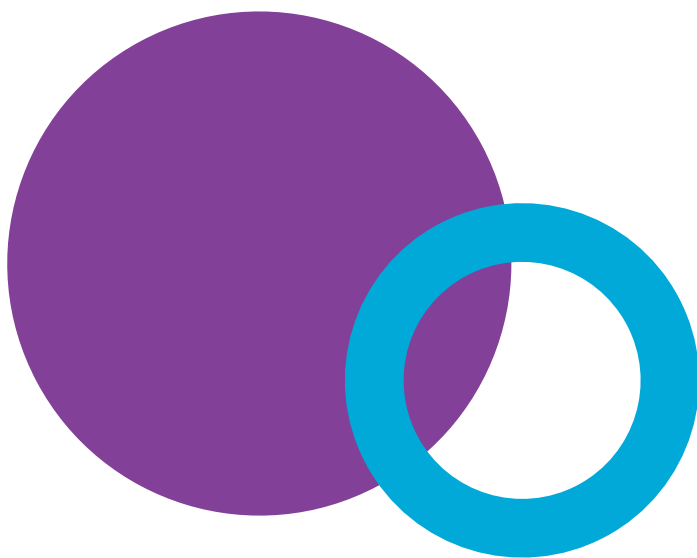
You can also add in a **second goal** in another area. Maybe you are doing well working on your vegetable goal and want to also add in some physical activity. Depending on where you currently are with physical activity, you can add in minutes or days to your plan. If you are walking the dog a couple days a week at a leisurely pace for 15 minutes, add 5-10 minutes and increase your pace. Maybe you like doing dance videos at home. Find a video and identify a time that you can do it. You can add in goals at the beginning of your process or along the way.

**Remember, these are YOUR goals and  
YOU get to decide what works for you!**

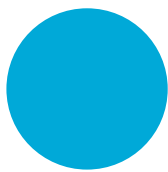
## RESILIENT MINDSET

No matter how well laid-out your plans are, something will always come along to throw you off your groove. The key to continuing the progress you have made is to **keep going**. You don't have to start over, but you do have to keep trying. Lasting changes are a product of positivity and growth. **Be positive** about your ability to make changes and to **continue to try** even when things get hard. Grow off of the progress you have already made.

There will be **set-backs**. Expect them. Someone will get sick, and you won't be able to exercise or no veggies will get eaten for a few days. Work or home life may get busy and stressful, or you didn't get to the grocery store this week. It may even be that you are experiencing a financial hardship and don't think that you can afford fruits or veggies.



Remember that there are **no failures-only learning experiences**. We are all an experiment of one, and what works for us doesn't work for someone else. Think of it like a science experiment in school or a recipe. You have the plan laid out. You have what you think you need. You are moving through the steps when Oops! You added too much milk to your batter or heated the oven too hot. Maybe you tried something you thought would work, and it didn't. That is when you say, "Well, look at that. That didn't work out as I planned. Time to try something different." It may take several times of tweaking the details to be successful, but as long as you keep trying, you will get there!



## HANDLING SET-BACKS AND BARRIERS

As we said before, set-backs will happen. The best way to work through them is to plan for them. **Identify barriers** to reaching your goal before you even start. Part of your planning process will be to figure out a way to work around or through those barriers instead of throwing your hands up and saying you can't do it.

Is time an issue? Try cutting up veggies on the weekend so you have one less step to do. Think fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive? Canned and frozen veggies are just fine and more convenient because you don't have worry about them spoiling as fast. The point is to **set yourself up for success** by acknowledging those barriers and working around them.

The same is true for those unexpected obstacles that come up and derail your progress. While you can't predict every barrier that you may encounter, you can prepare yourself for knowing that you won't be able to make smooth progress all the time. You can also **develop a plan** for getting **back on track** when things get hard by knowing that the set-back is only temporary, that you have not failed, and that you may have to adjust your thinking or your plan to the new situation.

## CELEBRATE THE WINS!

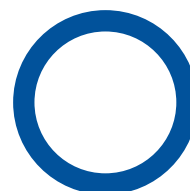
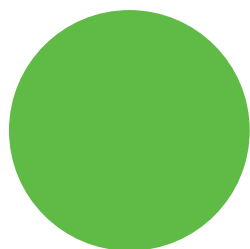
We know that making lasting changes takes time. We also know that working hard toward a goal is easier with a little celebration along the way! While not every week or even every day is going to be perfect, acknowledge what is going well and **feel proud** of that. Didn't make your goal this week, but got in one more day than last week? That's a win! Met your goals every week for four weeks? That's a win! Got back on track after a set-back? That's a win, too! Celebrating the small wins can help **build motivation** to keep moving forward and creating healthy habits.



## TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT MAKING CHANGES AND SETTING GOALS

You may be thinking that all of this talk of goals and improving health habits is great, and you may also be thinking that there is no way your kids and family are going to be on board with this. We have a few tips to help you.

1. **Listen to the other person's perspective.** Ask open-ended questions to help them explain why they don't want to make changes. These are questions that take more than a yes or no answer. Then reflect back their response to make sure you are understanding their view. If a child tells you that they don't want to eat healthy because they don't like healthy food, you might say, "You think that food that is healthy doesn't taste good."
2. **Offer some information** on why creating healthy habits is important or a fact about their concern in terms that are relevant to them. You might tell a six year old that you want them to be able to play with their friends and not get tired out, while you might tell a 12 year old that they will be able to perform better in school and their activities. Teens might understand concerns about cholesterol and high blood sugar and potential for health problems down the road.



3. **Pros and Cons:** Have your family members make a list of pros and cons of the goal you want to set or the changes you want to make. Sometimes coming up with the list on your own, rather than having someone tell you it, helps you start thinking about the good things that might come from making a change.
4. **Involve the family in setting the goal.** This can help everyone feel like they have a part in the goal and are working together toward it. Talk about those barriers and unexpected set-backs and how you will handle them as a family.



### Family Goal Setting

1. Listen
2. Offer
3. Pros and Cons
4. Involve and Plan



## YOU CAN DO IT!

Making changes to your health habits may seem like a big challenge at first. Following this guide can help you get started and hopefully bring you some success in making those changes. Remember that changes that happen slowly over time are more likely to stick with you. Know that set-backs are almost always temporary and can be overcome with patience and persistence. If you are working with your doctor on recommended changes, be sure to check in with them to make sure you are on track and to get guidance on next steps.

### Steps to Habit Change

- Set a goal. Start small. Be specific
- Keep track of your progress.
- Expand your goals as you accomplish them.
- Plan barriers and set-backs.
- Be resilient!
- Celebrate the wins!

Thank You for downloading the Healthy Kids Program  
Self Coaching Guide!

**Need some help getting started or have questions?**

Contact Angie Clark at (515) 241-3317 or  
[Angie.Clark@unitypoint.org](mailto:Angie.Clark@unitypoint.org)



**Healthy Choices Count!**

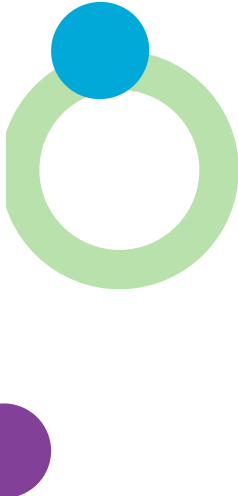


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**[unitypoint.org](http://unitypoint.org)**

GOALS FOR A HEALTHY YOU



GOAL #1

GOAL #2

My Health, My Way! Goal #1						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT

My Health, My Way! Goal #2						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT

Place a check mark in the box when you have accomplished your daily goals.