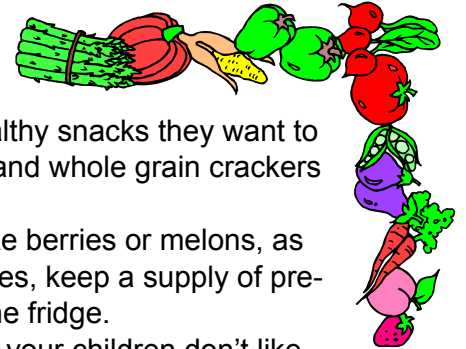


# HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

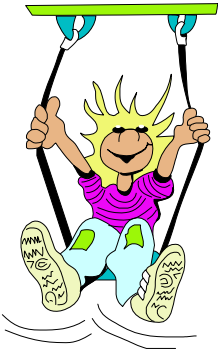
Many communities - often designed "by default" as populations rapidly grow - are fragmented and do not facilitate activities that encourage our children's health. While it is important to address these problems on a long term, community-wide basis by creating more walking or bicycle paths, sidewalks, and parks or changing traffic patterns, there are many small changes individual families can incorporate into their lives *right now*:

## INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY EATING



- ★ Take your children on a field trip to the supermarket with a shopping list of healthy snacks they want to buy. Encourage them to experiment with new, never-tasted fruits, vegetables and whole grain crackers to expand their "YES" list of wholesome snacks and desserts.
- ★ Keep plenty of fruits and veggies handy. Take advantage of seasonal fruits, like berries or melons, as a change from year round favorites. If your children won't eat cooked vegetables, keep a supply of pre-cut raw veggies (pepper strips, celery sticks, baby carrots) and low fat dip in the fridge.
- ★ Make healthy eating fun. Offer new foods and new ways of eating them. Think your children don't like beans - create a Mexican Treat by topping low fat or baked tortilla chips with fat free refried beans and salsa. How about an English muffin pizza topped with tomato sauce, mushrooms and low fat cheese? Create "confetti" macaroni & cheese by adding a package of frozen mixed vegetables to the mix.

## INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



- ★ Explore local parks and bike paths. Map out a "route" in your neighborhood for safe walking, rollerblading or bicycling. Use schools' playgrounds, tracks and fields after school hours, on the weekends, and during vacations when they are not occupied by students.
- ★ Make exercise a family affair. While gym class and recess provide some exercise time during the school day, parents also need to provide opportunities for physical activity. Take walks, bike rides or hikes together. Put music on and dance instead of watching TV after dinner. Everyone can do yard work, wash the car or help with the house cleaning.
- ★ Be a good role model - if children see that you are active and having fun, they are more likely to be and stay active. Bike, or walk to the post office or convenience store instead of driving. Walk up the stairs instead of taking the escalator in the mall. Park at the far end of the parking lot at the supermarket. Take an exercise class.

## HELP YOUR KIDS TO "BREATH EASY"

- ★ Clear the air ... of tobacco smoke. Second hand smoke remains in the air long after the cigarette is extinguished. If you are a smoker, QUIT! Set "house rules" that prohibit indoor smoking at home and smoking in family autos. Call the toll free QuitLine at (866) 657-8677 or visit [www.nj.quitnet.com](http://www.nj.quitnet.com) for quit smoking resources.
- ★ Clear the air ... of allergens. Clean or replace the filters in your home and car air conditioners at the beginning of each allergy season. Leave your shoes at the door, change your clothes and shower when you come in from outside since pollen sticks to your hair, clothes and shoes and can aggravate symptoms. Use a portable HEPA air filter in your bedroom - HEPA filters can remove 99.7% of dust, mold, spores, pollen and pet dander from the air.
- ★ As the weather warms, ozone levels will rise. High ozone levels occur on warm sunny days, especially when there is little air movement, usually between the hours of 11:00 AM and 7:00 PM. While ozone quickly breaks down once the sun has set, it is common to have many summer days in a row with high ozone levels. Call 1-800-782-0160 for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's pre-recorded message on the daily air quality.

