

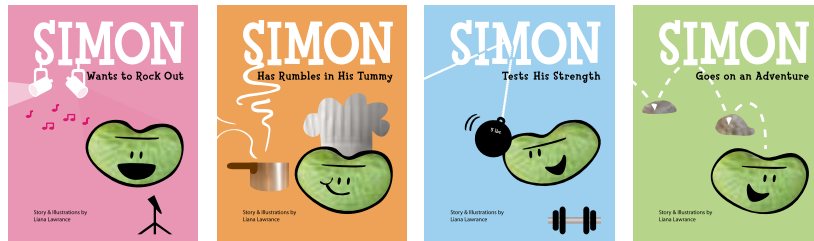
GROW INTO YOUR NATURAL BODY

Simon Bean wants children to live long, healthy, and happy lives. He wants parents talk to their children about how to do that while they are still young, so that they make smart health decisions as they grow older.

By living a healthy lifestyle out of habit, you gain all of the good stuff that goes along with it without effort. Providing your children with that ability early in their life allows them to win the battle against being overweight before it even becomes a problem.

The Simon book series and parent guide have been created to give parents an opportunity to talk to their children and teach them about healthy lifestyle habits earlier in their lives as a way to prevent the onset of unhealthy weight gain.

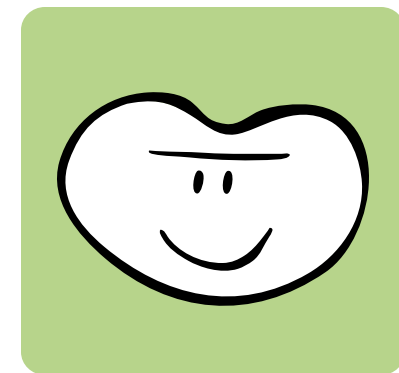
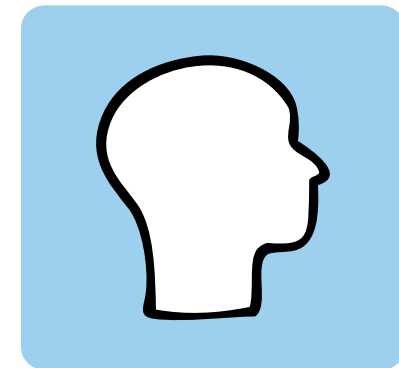
A battle prevented is a battle won!



SIMON

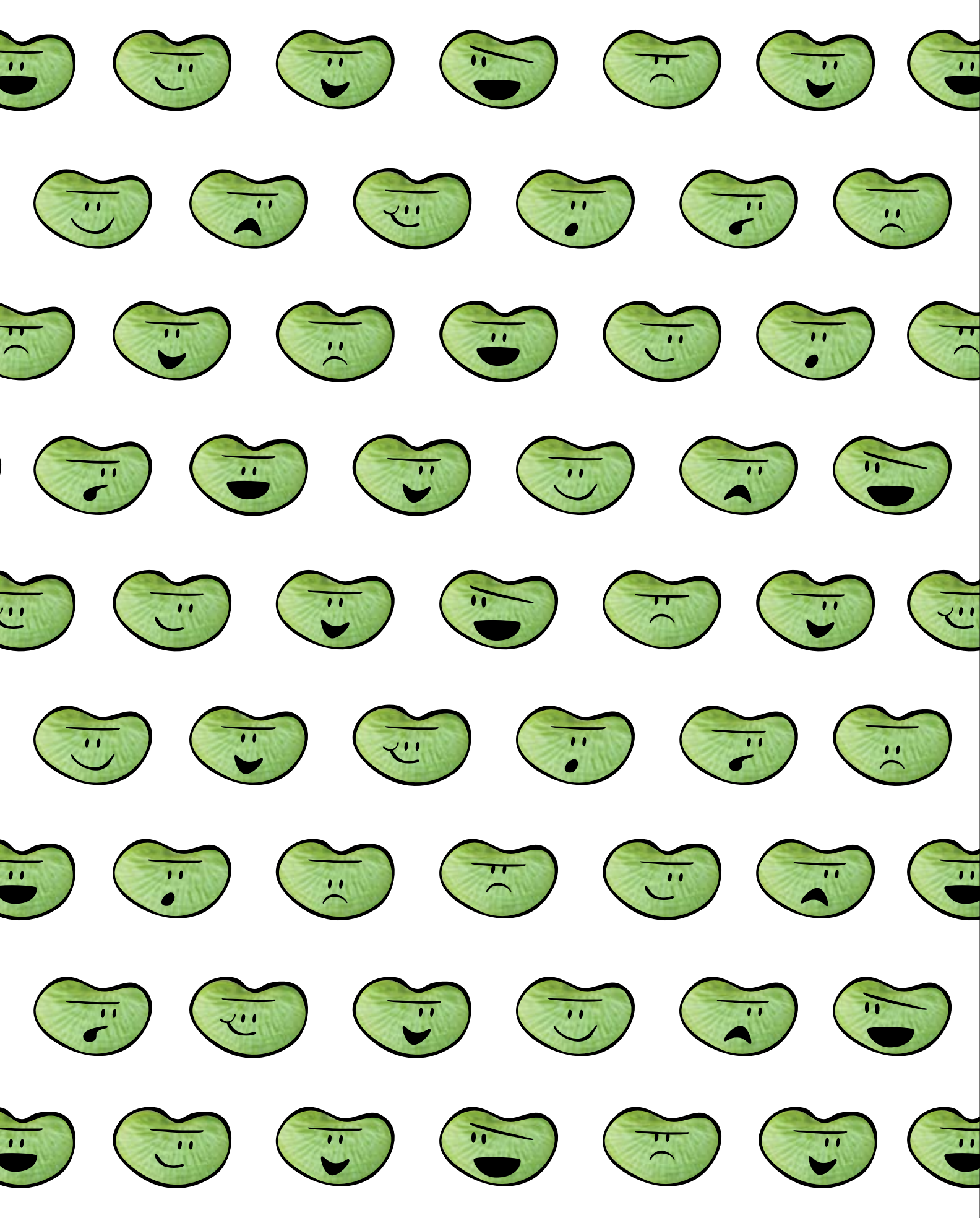
The Parent Guide

By Liana Lawrance



SIMON

The Parent Guide



Dedicated to our newest generation of kids.

The Simon Series has been created by Liana Lawrance for *Eat & Act: Grow Healthy with Your Child* an organization developed for her Masters of Fine Arts thesis project at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California. These books are an educational tool meant to create a forum for parents to talk to their children about healthy lifestyle habits earlier in their lives to prevent the onset of unhealthy weight gain.

A battle prevented is a battle won!

For more info, visit www.Eat-Act.org

Eat&Act
Grow Healthy With Your Child

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Published in 2008 for an MFA thesis project from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California

Under the direction of Phil Hamlett and Mary Scott

Other direction from Michael Kilgore, Beth LaDove, and Michael Sainato

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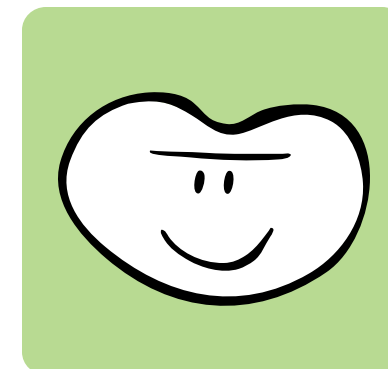
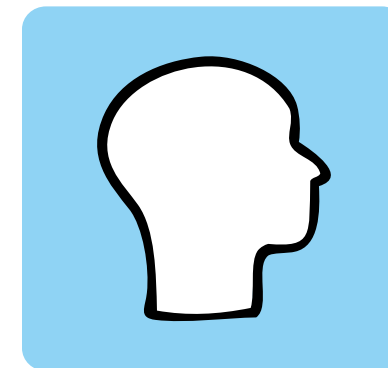
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SIMON

The Parent Guide

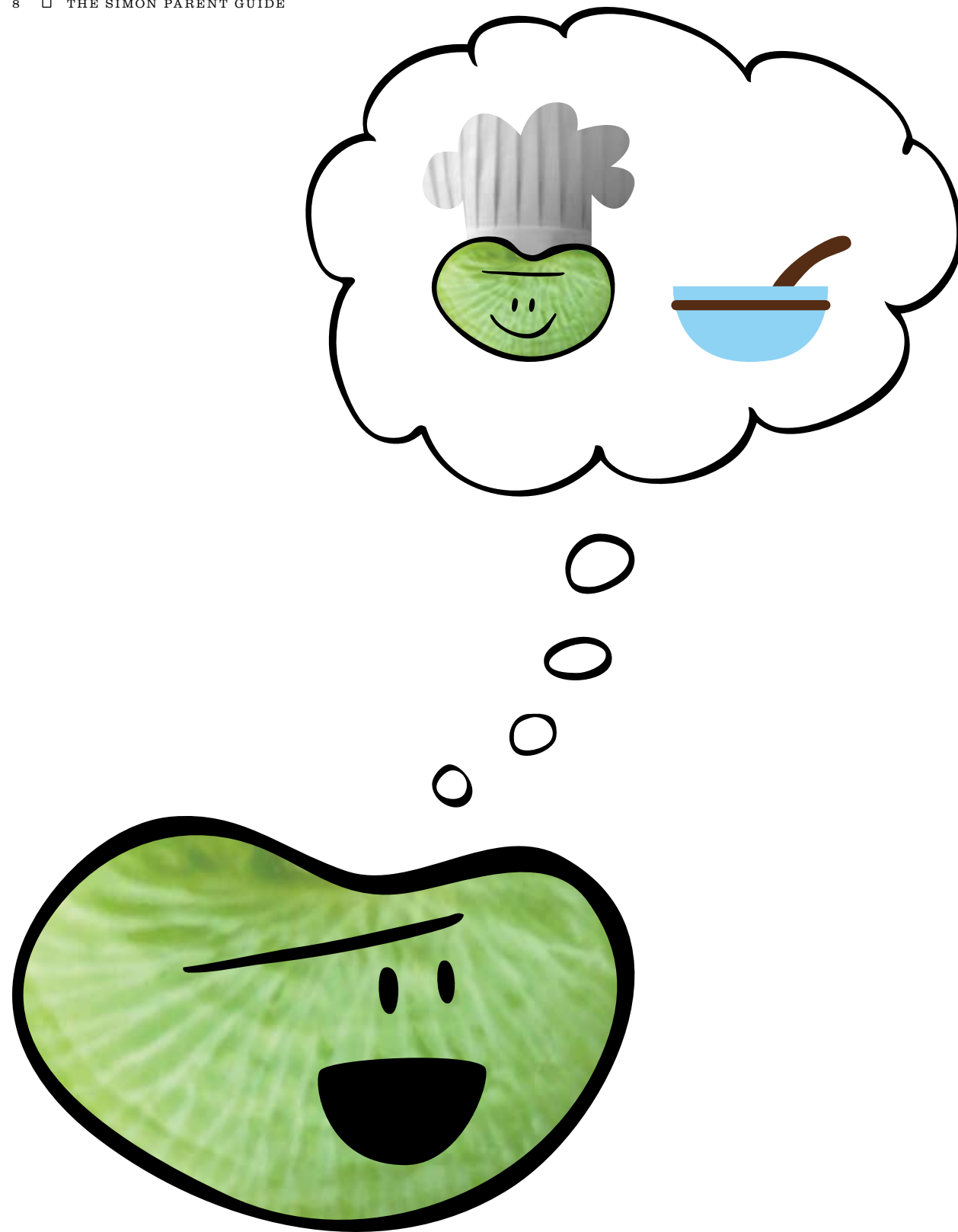
By Liana Lawrance



THE BUILDING BLOCKS

A strong foundation of living healthy begins with these blocks.

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INTRODUCING SIMON

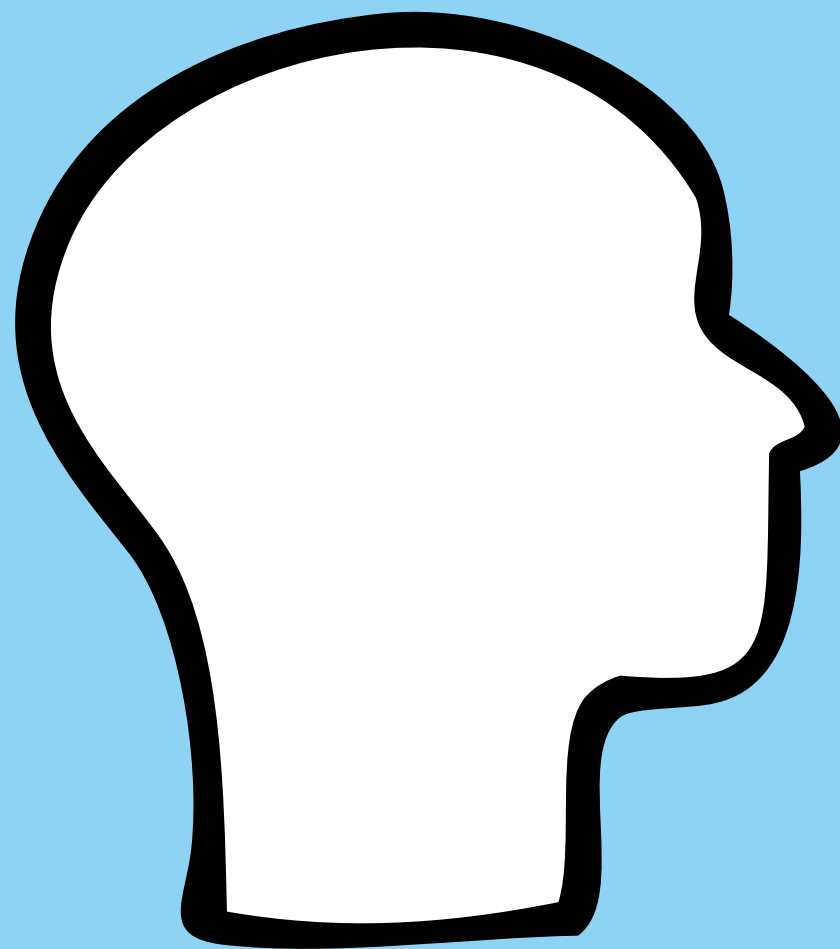
A new roll model for happy healthy kids and parents.

For those of you who haven't discovered who Simon is from reading the book series, he's just a lima bean with some pretty silly dreams. As he pursues living out his dreams, he learns healthy lessons along the way. Lessons that are proving to be very important to teach your child early in their life.

Today, obesity rates in children are climbing and showing no signs of reversing. Health professionals feel that in order to successfully combat this problem, more education on the topic of healthy habits needs to happen much earlier in a child's life. Health education today doesn't happen until a child reaches elementary school, and by then the bad habits that will lead them to an unhealthy lifestyle have already been established. This makes correcting those bad habits very difficult, as millions of overweight adults can attest to today.

The Simon series has been created as a fun educational tool for parents and young children as a response to this need. These books are meant to give parents an opportunity to talk to their children about healthy lifestyle habits earlier in their lives as a way to prevent the onset of unhealthy weight gain.

This parent guide is meant to provide supplemental information to what is given in the Simon books. As well as give motivation and helpful suggestions on how to adopt Simon's healthy priorities to make lifestyle adjustments within your family.



LOGICAL MOTIVATION

A battle prevented is a battle won.

Seat belts are a preventative measure we take out of habit and without thought.

Prevent (pri-vent) — verb.
1. to keep from occurring
2. to avert
3. to hinder

If every time you drove and were guaranteed to be in an accident, you would be sure to wear your safety belt.

THE STORY OF GENERATION XL

Why we have gained unhealthy weight.

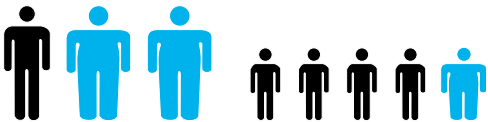
What if our roads were just constructed in a way that made driving that unsafe? You would do everything in your power to prevent serious injury.

In regards to our health, living in America today is very much like having poorly constructed roads that assure we will end up in a situation where our health and life is compromised.

Our widely adopted American lifestyle is causing us to gain unhealthy weight. For a great majority of us being overweight is partially a result of the way our society is set up and a recent shift in our cultural values.

While there is no easy explanation behind all the factors that come together to make the people in our country so large, this part of the guide will break it down into a form that is understandable. It will consist of two parts: The Toxic Food Environment and Our Sedentary Lifestyle.

American weight statistics:



2 out of 3 adults (65%) and 1 out of 5 children (20%) are overweight or obese.

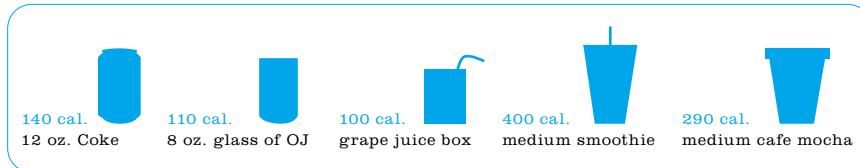


TOXIC FOOD ENVIRONMENT

The word “toxic” in this particular case is not defined by the potentially dangerous chemicals found in food. The “toxic food environment” is a term to describe the damaging food framework that surrounds us today.

There are three specific contributors to this very unhealthy food environment.

Calories in our drinks:



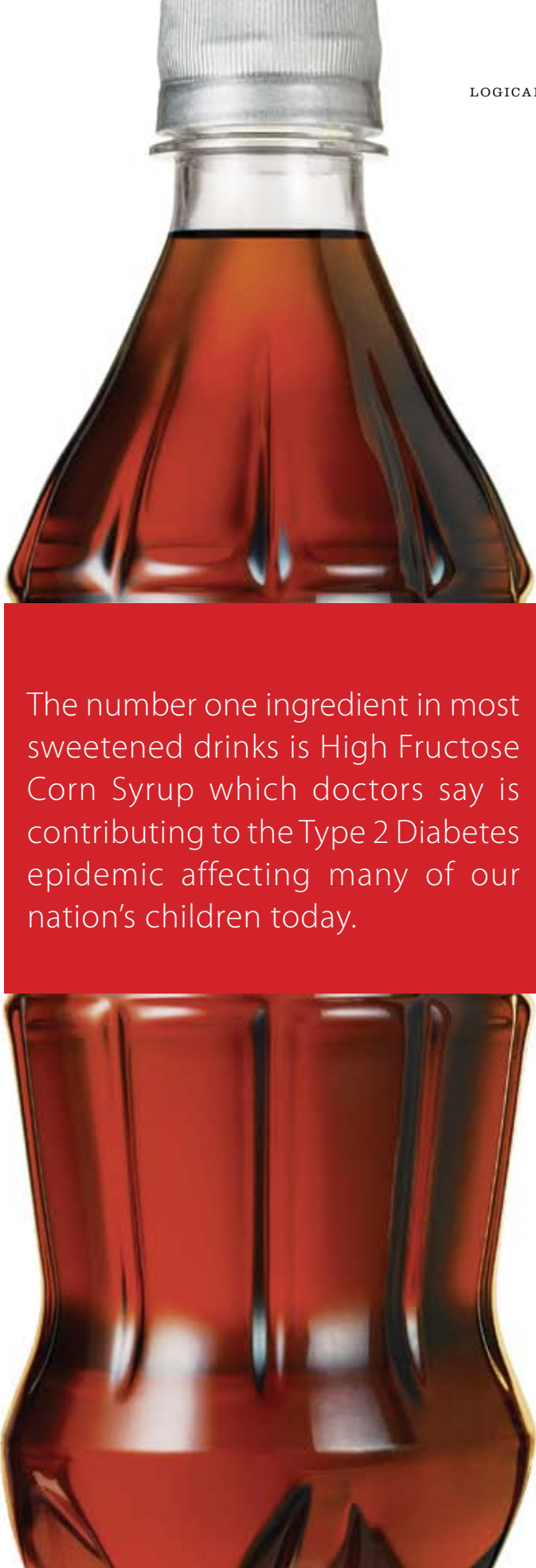
CALORIES IN LIQUID FORM

Sodas, fruit drinks, fruit juice, espresso drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, kool-aid, fruit smoothies. Essentially, anything that is not plain old drinking water.

Somewhere in the last 20 years, drinking things such as sodas, fruit drinks, and fruit juice became a regular part of every meal. Slowly, they have replaced water as a thirst quencher. These sweetened drinks not only increase a meal’s caloric value, but the number one ingredient contained in most of them has been indicated as a huge contributor to the Type 2 Diabetes epidemic sweeping our nation’s children: High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS).

High Fructose Corn Syrup essentially doesn’t trigger the part of your brain that tells you when you are full.

There is a lengthy biological explanation behind this, but for the sake of keeping this section moving along, this ingredient will be discussed more in depth later.



The number one ingredient in most sweetened drinks is High Fructose Corn Syrup which doctors say is contributing to the Type 2 Diabetes epidemic affecting many of our nation’s children today.

Processed food consumption in America:



90% of an American's food budget is spent on processed foods.

PROCESSED FOODS

Any food that has undergone a process before consuming. Specific to the problem of unhealthy weight, foods that come from a bag, box, machine, or restaurant.

Processed foods often contain refined sugars and flour which do not have much fiber. You have probably heard a about this concept of “fiber” but are unaware of it’s importance to a healthy diet.

Fiber is the part of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains that keep your digestive system clean. Our bodies use more calories to process fiber. But in terms of hunger, fiber provides a longer lasting feeling of fullness.

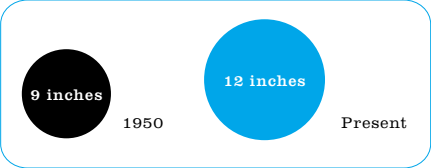
If processed foods are missing this key hunger killing ingredient of fiber, that means if you eat them on a regular basis, then you will feel hungry more often, and will eat more as a result. As you can see, this turns into a vicious cycle where you are always eating more than you need.

Processed foods are cheap and easy to get: in the vending machine at work or school, fast food restaurants, corner markets, convenience stores, gas stations, drug stores, book stores, electronic stores, even hardware stores have snack foods for you to purchase. It’s no wonder we eat so much of it. But the food industry has worked very hard for the last 20 years to make it cheap, easy, and desirable to buy.



Processed foods are missing a key hunger killing ingredient: fiber. That means if you eat processed foods on a regular basis, then you will feel hungry more often, and will eat a lot more as a result.

Typical dinner plate size:



LARGE PORTIONS

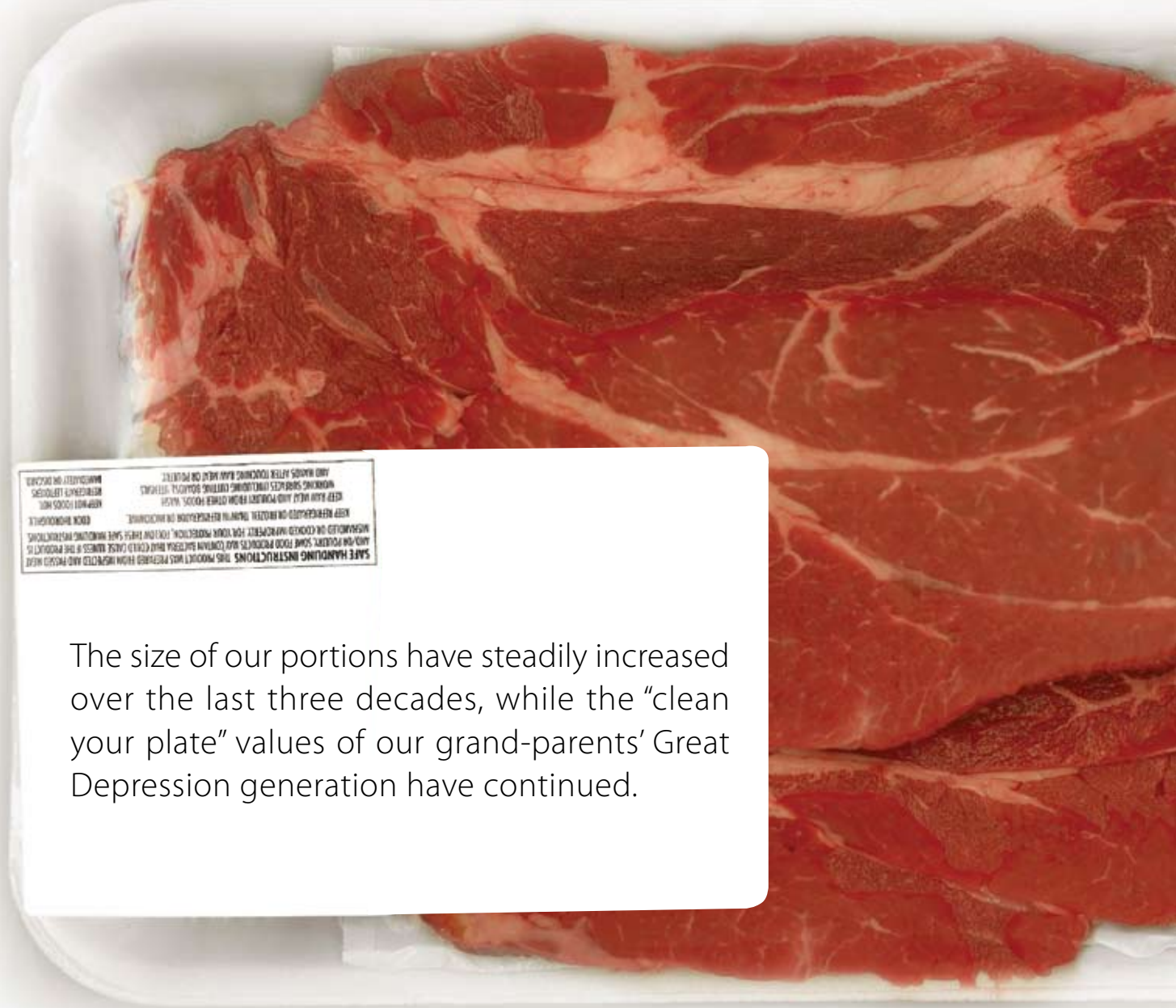
A serving of a drink, snack, or meal that contains more liquid or food than a single person should consume in one sitting. Better defined by all meals purchased in restaurants.

This factor is pretty obvious if you understand what causes unhealthy weight gain. Consuming more energy than you expel causes your body to store excess energy (calories) as fat.

Biologically, because of evolution, humans have a difficult time regulating how much food we eat when a large portion is put before us. In an effort to keep from starving, the primal part of our brain tells us to eat as much as we can because it doesn't know when our next meal will come.

Almost every restaurant we eat at serves oversized portions of food. The size of our portions at home have steadily increased over the last three decades, while the “clean your plate” values of our grand-parents’ generation continued. Food now comes in “king sized” packages with no instructions of how much of that portion a single person should eat.

Our eyes have become much to large for our stomachs. We have a skewed idea of what is a proper portion size.



The size of our portions have steadily increased over the last three decades, while the “clean your plate” values of our grand-parents’ Great Depression generation have continued.

SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE

There is a very good chance that many of us do not move enough. We sit when we drive to work, we sit at work, we sit driving home, and we sit at the computer or in front of the television before we head to bed at night.

This lack of movement is equally responsible for our country's unhealthy weight gain as our toxic food environment.



A SOCIETY OF SITTERS

Take a moment to think about a typical day for you and your family. How much time do you spend sitting in front of a screen or in a car?

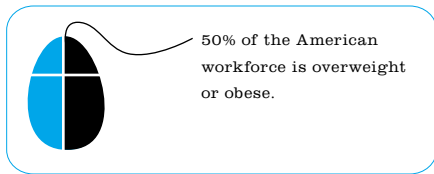
Our country has experienced a shift in lifestyle values over the course of a few decades. The car, freeways, and highways gave way to easier transportation. The television and computer gave way to easier access to entertainment.

Our government and businesses participated in making these inventions easier and more pleasurable to use. The government responded by building roads. Industry created broadcast stations and later cable. The ease of access to these things allowed us to assimilate them into our daily life and values. We did this without question, because everyone was doing it and it was so easy to do. Sitting and being inactive became the American way of life. And now doctors are saying that children are far less active than at any time in human history.

The high value in which we've placed in our sedentary lifestyle has resulted in us moving much less.

Over the last half of this century
industrialization, inventions of
convenience, and economic
growth gave birth to a shift in
lifestyle values.

Weight of the American workforce:



BLUE COLLAR TO KEYBOARD COLLAR

The workplace environment for many Americans has progressed from hard manual labor to desk jobs.

Just as the industrial revolution changed the landscape of the American workforce, the computer age came and many manual labor jobs were considerably reduced. Computers made the exchange of information faster and easier, so the American workforce adapted to this new way of communicating.

Unfortunately for them, this meant less time being physically active. Biologically our bodies are made to be used for labor intensive movement. We have a finely tuned system to take in energy and use it to do manual work. With the transition of the American workforce to white collar jobs, we have created a crime against our body's inherent function. Our body's response is to store the energy that we consume, because we are no longer involved in activities in our daily work life that would burn off that energy.



Kids exposure to commercials:

40,000

Advertisements a year kids are exposed to, most of which are for food.

FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE

Television only contributes to the problem of gaining unhealthy weight.

Our society has become very TV-centric. Ninety-nine percent of households in America have at least one television. They’ve infiltrated our gas pumps, lines at the bank, automobiles, even our cell phones. It has also become socially acceptable to watch “reality” on our television rather than getting out of our houses to live it.

Not only does TV encourage a sedentary lifestyle which promotes weight gain, but during the many hours of television watching we are subjected to hundreds of advertisements. Most of which are selling us things we don’t need. Television is responsible for telling us we are inadequate, forcing us to feel bad for ourselves. Some of us respond to this feeling by eating. A lot of the time we are eating mindlessly while watching television.

Sure television can be quite entertaining, sometimes even informative, and one *maybe* two hours a day won’t cause too much harm. But when we are watching hours on end, and snacking the whole time through, this is where TV can cause a lot of damage.



MOVING
LESS
+
EATING

MORE
=
WEIGHT
GAIN

An important part of adjusting our lifestyle habits is to understand the emotional and biological effects of gaining unhealthy weight.

THE RESULTS OF GENERATION XL

How the unhealthy weight affects us.

Gaining unhealthy weight as you may or may not know can affect a person in several ways. Two main circumstances being psychological and biological. Both effects work together to make for a very low quality of life and for an unfortunate many, a shorter lifespan.

It is an important part of the process of adopting Simon's healthy priorities to understand what happens to people emotionally and biologically when they gain unhealthy weight. The following results are very real and affect millions of Americans who suffer from carrying around unhealthy weight.

American death statistics:

300,000

Deaths are contributed to obesity related diseases each year.



PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT

Even though unhealthy weight gain results in an obvious physical problem, there is often an unseen complication that is dealt with on an emotional level.

MIND GAMES

Despite the growing population of overweight people, being overweight or obese is still seen as a social abnormality.

Children and adults who are different from everyone else are often ridiculed and shunned for what they looked like. For this reason weight gain is considered a cosmetic problem more than any other.

Due to media and advertising, we are constantly being bombarded with images of what we think is “normal” and “beautiful.” Celebrities are always being put under a microscope for how they look. This value of extreme examination and questioning is then passed on to the general public.

This is not to say that normal weighted people fail to have emotional problems. They too fall victim to the over self examination touted by the media and entertainment industry, why else is the diet market so prosperous? But this problem has an exponential effect on many people with unhealthy weight gain because sometimes their response is to find comfort in food. A response that continues to contribute to the problem.

Once a person develops a distorted view of themselves, it is difficult to overcome without treatment and counseling. Add changing diet and lifestyle habits to the list, and the prospect of overcoming weight gain is overwhelming.

When one feels they are different and don’t fit into the socially acceptable norm, their self-esteem gets dragged down. Quite often overweight children and adults are ridiculed by their peers. Low self-esteem gives way to a whole host of reactions to the feeling of inadequacy. When that low self-esteem is brought on by our toxic food environment, comfort eating is one response. This in turn creates a cycle of eating to feel better and then feeling bad for eating.

Low self-esteem takes a toll on a person’s energy levels. When we feel depressed, we lack motivation to act on a problem. This inhibits a person from getting active to reverse the weight gain. Yet another vicious cycle that is difficult to over come due to the nature of it.





BIOLOGICAL EFFECT

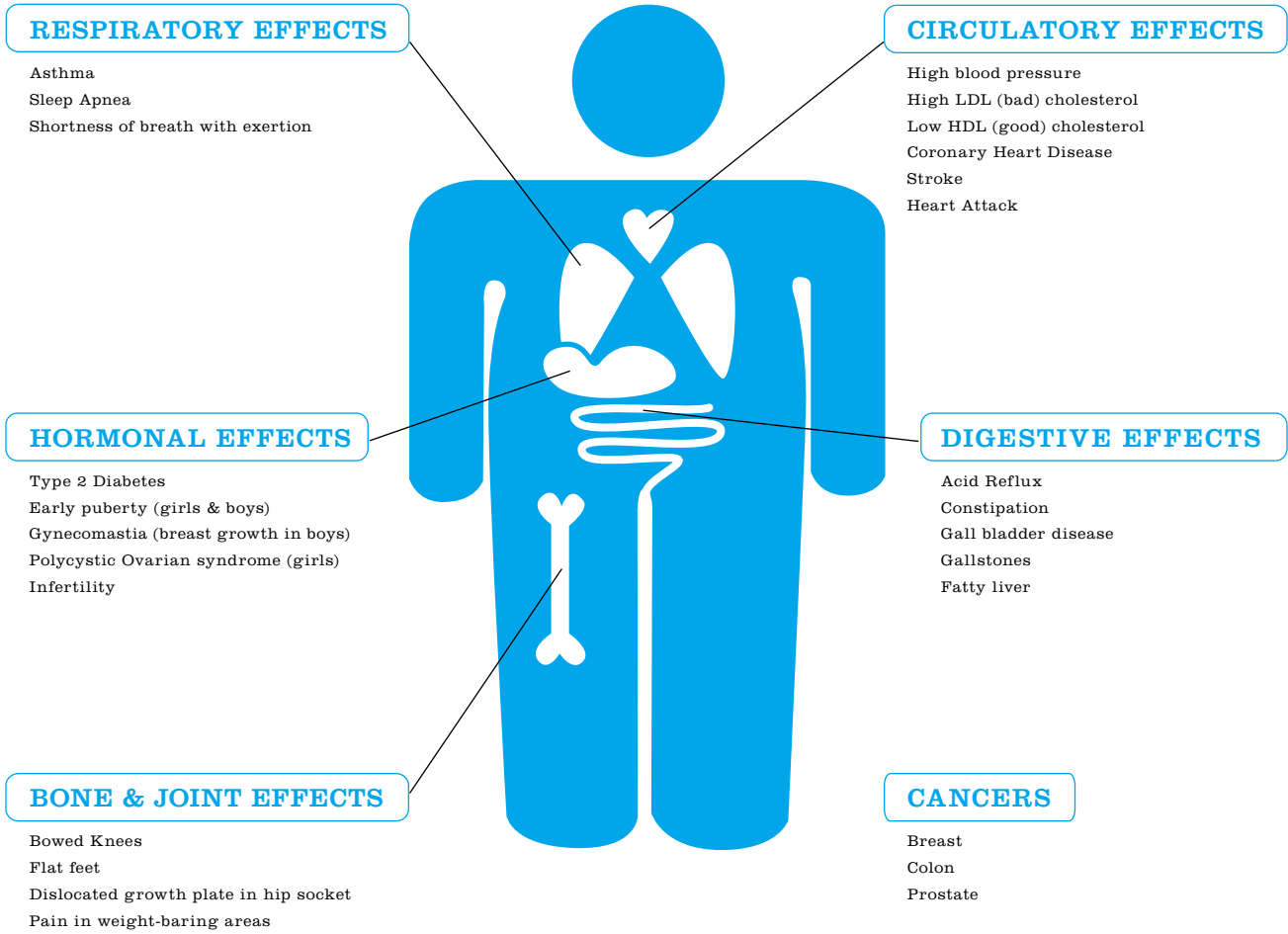
Carrying excess weight is not a natural thing for a body to do. When unhealthy weight takes its toll on the body, some of its repercussions are irreversible and deadly.

This is one of many reasons why preventing and addressing this potential low quality and low quantity of life becomes very beneficial to you and your child.

BODY BREAKDOWN

In addition to the malnutrition we experience from the toxic food environment, our bodies react to unhealthy weight gain in the form of very serious diseases.

Doctors are very concerned because they are now witnessing children developing adult diseases due to their excess weight. These diseases and disorders come with their own complications. But combined with the dismal psychological effects of weight gain, they create a rather low and unfulfilling quality of life.



Type 2 Diabetes in children:



Doctors now predict that 1 out of 3 children born after the year 2000 will develop Type 2 Diabetes from being overweight.

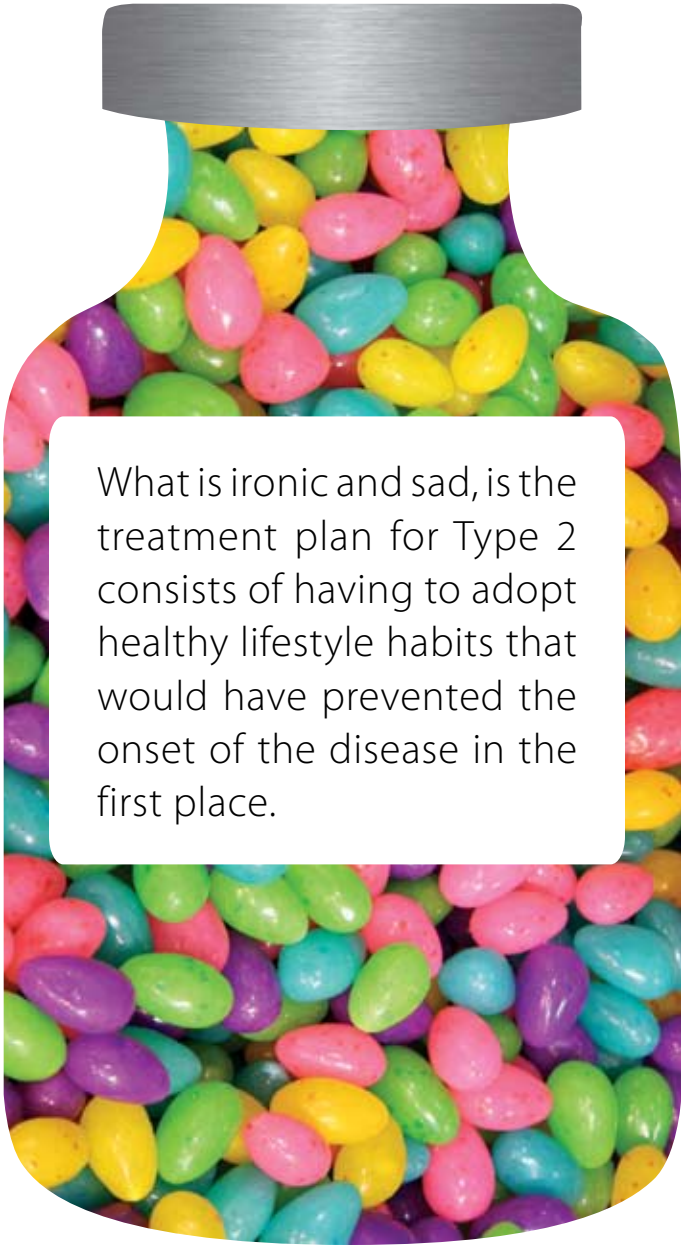
THE ALARMING RISE OF TYPE 2 DIABETES

Formally known as “Adult Onset Diabetes” because it use to only affect overweight adults, this condition’s name was changed to “Type 2” due to the rising number of overweight children and teens who are developing the disease.

Over the last 3 decades doctors have seen a shocking increase in Type 2 Diabetes in children. This condition usually begins as insulin resistance, a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly. As the need for insulin rises, the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce it.

This disease is wholly preventable, but once a person has been diagnosed, there is no way to reverse its presence. Untreated or inappropriately-treated, Type 2 can cause problems with the kidneys, legs, feet, eyes, heart, nerves, and blood flow, which could lead to kidney failure, gangrene, amputation, blindness, or stroke. For these reasons, it is important to follow a strict treatment plan. What is ironic and sad, is the treatment plan for Type 2 consists of having to adopt the healthy lifestyle habits that would have prevented the onset of the disease in the first place.

The exact cause of Type 2 diabetes is unknown. However, there does appear to be a genetic factor which causes it to run in families. And, although a person can inherit a tendency to develop Type 2 diabetes, it usually takes another factor, such as obesity, to bring on the disease.



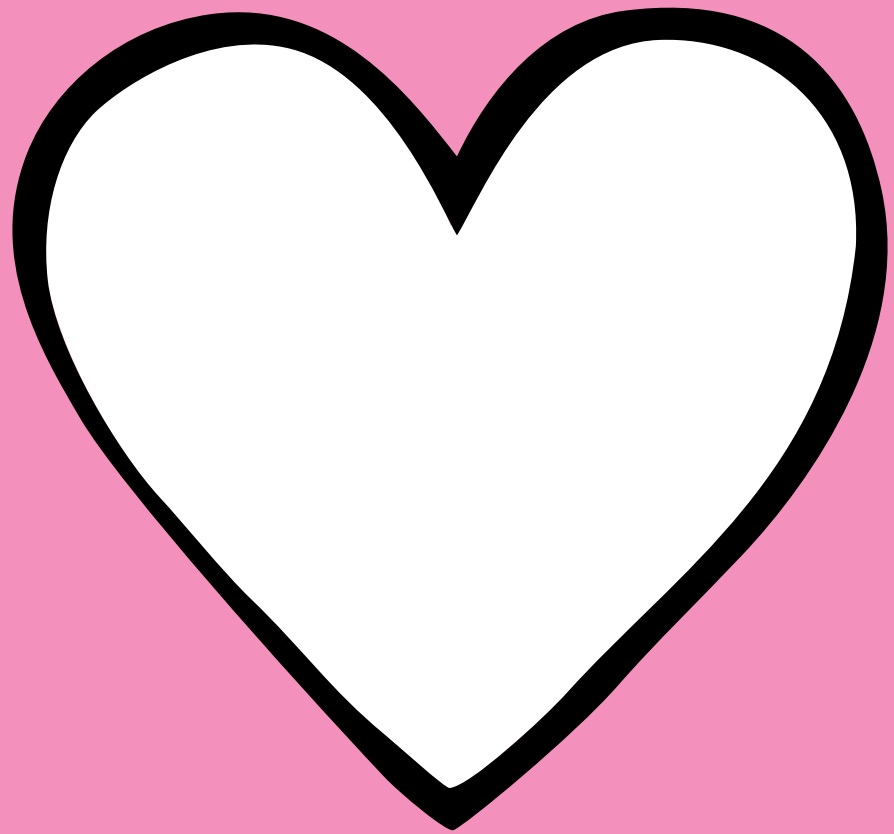
What is ironic and sad, is the treatment plan for Type 2 consists of having to adopt healthy lifestyle habits that would have prevented the onset of the disease in the first place.

So far we have learned that our culture and society is constructed in a way that causes us to gain unhealthy weight which in turn causes us to live a low quality of life.

If these values continue to go
unchallenged or uncorrected, what
does that mean for your child?

YOUR
CHILD
MAY
NOT

LIVE AS
LONG
AS YOU
WILL



EMOTIONAL MOTIVATION

Let us pause for a moment.

Nurture + Love + Commitment =
Responsibility

BEING THE PARENT

Why we need to make lifestyle adjustments.

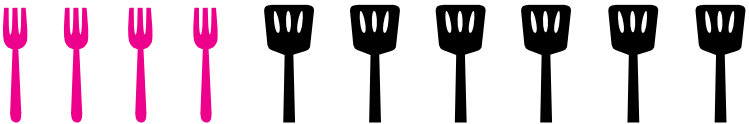
As a parent the previous statement potentially caused you to feel some emotions. Whatever those emotions might be, they all stem from the same place. Love for your child.

The information leading up to this motivation is not meant to cause guilt, nor is it meant to give an excuse. But it is meant to give you logical reasoning behind why gaining unhealthy weight has become the norm for so many people in America. This information is also why doctors are now predicting the reduced lifespan of children born today.

Consider this the “physics” behind “weight gain in America” much like the “physics” in the story behind “what happens when you don’t wear your seat belt.” Both situations have unfavorable outcomes. But the good news is that they both also have preventative measures.

The goal of choosing to take responsibility of your child’s future health is to make sure they live out their dreams, even the silly ones.

From an American Obesity Association survey in 2006:



61% of parents said, in terms of their own behavior, that it would “not be very difficult” to change their eating and/or physical activity patterns if it would help prevent obesity in any of their children. What are you willing to do?



A HAPPY HEALTHY CHILD

Inspiration to make lifestyle adjustments.

Having children creates a lot of change in your life. You feel things you've never felt before, you develop a lot of hope for your kids and their future. However, in today's society, with its fast pace, multiple opportunities, or in the case of low income families a lack of opportunity, we sometimes hope for too much for our children that we might forget our ultimate desire; to have a happy healthy child.

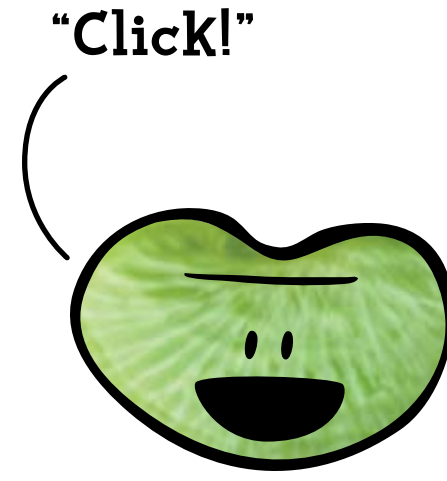
Being a parent is one of the greatest roles anyone can play in their life. It is your responsibility to protect your child from harm. If the harm is coming from their food and cultural environment, as a parent, you need to find ways to protect you kid from falling victim to the lures of convenience, over-indulgence, and sedentary activities. These factors are the greatest threat facing a healthy child's future.

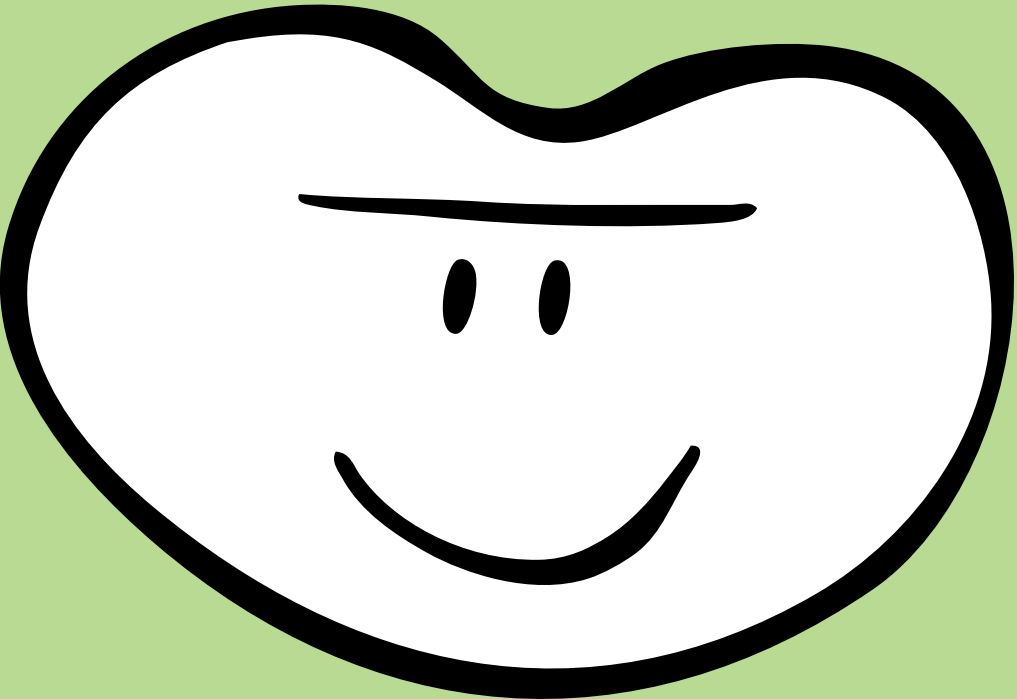
Children are innocent, they don't know any better than what you teach them. So giving them whatever they want whenever they want it, you fail to teach them boundaries. If a child grows up not understanding boundaries where food and activity are concerned, the consequences they will suffer could result in a low quality of life and shortened lifespan. Where does that fit into the equation of having a happy healthy child? And right now, those consequences are considered a part of personal responsibility, how can someone be responsible when they weren't raised being personally responsible for their health in the first place?

When you make decisions regarding your child, think about how those decisions will affect your child 10 years down the road. Consider how what you are teaching them will affect their own decision making in the future. With the right tools you can teach your children how to make good health choices as they grow.

IT IS TIME TO FASTEN OUR

SAFETY BELTS





SIMON’S HEALTHY PRIORITIES

It is just as easy to teach children good habits as it is to teach them bad habits.

There are precautions you can take to prevent that unhealthy weight gain from sneaking up on your child.

GROW INTO YOUR NATURAL BODY

Adopting priorities towards a healthy lifestyle.

Some of you may look at your child at this point in their lives and say “My child isn’t overweight.” This is no reason to become complacent. As already established our cultural environment is constructed to cause us to gain unhealthy weight.

Living a healthy lifestyle out of habit, you gain all of the good stuff that goes along with it without effort. Providing your children with that ability early in their life allows them to win the battle against obesity before it even becomes a problem. This is the goal of the Simon book series: A battle prevented is a battle won!

But more importantly, by adapting your child’s lifestyle to one that is more healthy benefits not only your child but you as well. The only way for these priorities to be effective is if you too incorporate them into your life. Think of this as allowing your child to grow into their natural body.

Moderation is the key, do not take these suggestions and priorities to the extreme. That could push your child to grow up with eating disorders or to rebel against healthy living all together because you forced them to do so. Simon’s healthy priorities are meant to be incorporated into your daily life as the *norm*, to become obsessive about the cosmetic aspects of unhealthy weight does just as much harm as ignoring your health all together.

The following pages contain the four vital habits addressed in the Simon books to combat the cultural environment and lifestyle choices responsible for causing unhealthy weight gain. Each of these priorities are touched on in the Simon series to help you talk to your children about them in a language they understand; being silly and overcoming obstacles around them.

If you find yourself overwhelmed by the ideas presented in this section or in the Simon books, feel free to incorporate them one at a time into your life. Even committing yourself and your child to just one of them will have a positive affect as you both grow.

Take a deep breath, have fun, and get creative!

SIMON’S HEALTHY PRIORITY #1

REGULATE CALORIES IN LIQUID FORM

Many doctors consider consuming these drinks in high quantities to be like a “gateway drug” to obesity.

SIMON Wants to Rock Out

Simon Bean dreams of becoming a rock star. While he’s out looking for help he runs into a sour soda can and a jittery juice box that refuse to help him live his dream. He finally gets assistance from a glowing glass of water.

This story is meant to help you explain to your child why they can’t have sodas and juices all the time if they ask.



CALORIES IN LIQUID FORM:

- Soda (including diet)
- Fruit drinks
- Fruit juice (including 100%)
- Smoothies
- Powdered fruit drinks
- Sweet tea
- Flavored milks
- Yogurt drinks

Why not diet soda?

Many of you may be wondering why diet soda is included in the regulate list when they do not have any calories. *Think of it this way, how do diet drinks benefit your child?* This is the reason they should be regulated in your child's diet. The caffeine and artificial sweetening in diet drinks offer nothing good for your child, unlike water which is the hero of drinks.

CAR FUEL NOT BODY FUEL

This is your first priority because calorie laden sweet drinks full of High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) and sugar are directly linked to the rising rates of Type 2 Diabetes in children and teens.

High Fructose Corn Syrup is derived from genetically modified corn that is also used to create the car fuel alternative ethanol. The corn it comes from is not edible in the form you think of corn.

Sugar has always been seen as a bad guy, but its evilness pales in comparison to HFCS. Any time you have the opportunity to choose a food or drink product that has sugar in it over a food or drink product that has HFCS, choose sugar. If your only choice is HFCS (which all sweetened drinks in the US have in them) just by pass it. This is why: HFCS doesn't activate the part of your brain that tells you are full.

While it is chemically made up of the same things as sugar, the form in which it is constructed causes your body to process this sweetener like an alcohol. This causes the over production of insulin in your liver which blocks leptin, the hormone that tells your brain you are full.

It may be interesting to know that HFCS is also found in 40% of processed foods.



Special or rare occasion drinks:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Sodas (including diet) | Sweet tea |
| Fruit drinks | Flavored milk |
| Fruit juice (including 100%) | Yogurt drinks |
| Smoothies | |
| Powdered fruit drinks | |

HOW TO REGULATE WHAT TO DRINK

The word “regulate” is used because denying your child any food or drink product automatically creates an unhealthy relationship with it.

When you make a food “forbidden,” it will create an intense curiosity that could lead to subversive behavior around that particular food product later in their lives.

A healthy way to approach regulating calories in liquid form, is to establish when drinking them is okay. By setting guidelines for your child, they will form a healthy relationship with those drinks. Those guidelines must be set by talking to your child about them and then leading by example.

A “special” occasion would be the weekly family dinner at a restaurant or a friend’s birthday party. Remember, it is very important never to fully deny your child a drink or food product. But if you provide them an environment lead by example where the “special” or rare occasions are the only times they have access to those drinks, they will grow up with the habit of choosing water over those other drinks unless they feel the occasion calls for it.

DRINKS FOR EVERY DAY CONSUMPTION:

- Water
- Water
- Water
- Low fat milk
- Soy milk
- Water



THE MOST REFRESHING HYDRATION

Water has everything you need, and nothing you don't need.

It is vital to your body's function and health. By replacing the calorie heavy drinks with water, you are not only cutting out the extra calories, but you are re-hydrating your body helping it to run smoothly.

More than likely if a child is in the habit of drinking water on a regular basis, they will find those sweetened drinks too sweet and avoid them on their own terms once they get older. Water can also assist in portion control, drink a glass before each meal and you won't eat quite as much.

Instilling the habit of drinking water on a regular basis benefits your child ten fold.

What about 100% fruit juice?

Like the diet drinks, many of you may be wondering why something that seems so obviously healthy like 100% fruit juice should be regulated in your child's diet. Juice from fruit is what nature created to get us to eat our fiber. If we only drink the juice we are missing out on the most important part of fruit, the fiber. You can also think of it in terms of calories. One small orange has 60 calories AND fiber, an 8 oz. glass of orange juice has 110 calories and NO fiber.

The most 100% fruit juice a child should have in a day is 6 oz.

SIMON’S HEALTHY PRIORITY #2

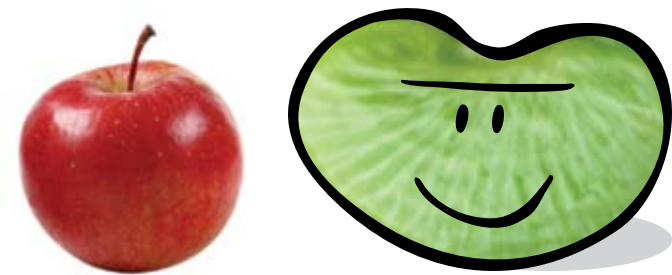
REDUCE PROCESSED FOODS IN YOUR DIET

Processed foods lack many vitamins and nutrients that our bodies need to function properly. These foods are also void of fiber, an important hunger killing ingredient.

SIMON Has Rumbles in his Tummy

Simon Bean is very hungry so he dreams of becoming a chef. He chooses to visit a grocery store and eats lots of food from boxes. But his hunger isn't satisfied. He then decides to visit his cousin Carry the carrot at the farm. Carry cooks him fresh stuff from the farm which cures the rumbles in Simon's tummy.

This story is meant to help you explain to your child why they can't always eat processed foods from boxes, bags, and fast food.



PROCESSED FOODS:

- Junk food
- Frozen dinners
- Most food marketed by ads
- Pre-packaged food
- Food in vending machines
- Fast food

OVERFED AND UNDERNOURISHED

This should be your second priority because it is what processed foods lack that harms our health.

Processed foods generally contain high amounts of fat, sugar, and salt. All of these ingredients are well known for being bad for our bodies. But it is what process foods lack that also harm our health. Eating large amounts of processed foods can actually make you malnourished. Another danger of eating a diet full of processed foods is that it can increase your risk for cancer.

Processed foods lack many vitamins and nutrients that our bodies and minds need to function properly. In regards to our hunger, processed foods do not have a key hunger killing ingredient: fiber. This important component takes longer for our bodies to process, and also requires more energy for our bodies to process. That means when we eat more foods with fiber, we feel full for longer and our bodies burn more calories just processing the stuff.

Refined wheat, sugar, and HFCS are cheap ingredients used in all processed foods to increase their shelf life. But these ingredients have little to no fiber. Without fiber, processed foods only satisfy our hunger for a short period of time, which causes us to eat more food. This cycle increases our daily caloric intake.

By reducing the amount of processed foods, and increasing the amount of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains (whole wheat products and brown rice are examples of whole grains) you not only provide your body with essential nutrients that processed foods lack, but you also decrease the number of calories you take in because you won't feel hungry as often. It is a win win situation for you and your child.



Processed foods lack many vitamins and nutrients that our bodies and minds need to function properly.

HOW TO FIND THE FOOD BALANCE

The key idea to walk away with from this priority is to find ways of replacing processed food favorites with healthier versions of those dishes.

The word “reduce” is used in the same fashion that the word “regulate” is used for the calories in liquid form. It is important to remember that by making a food product “forbidden” you create the opportunity for subversive behavior around that food later in the child’s life.

Also, it is understandable that sometimes life calls for a meal or snack to come from processed foods. So please don’t feel guilty when you need to turn to them for a meal every now and then. Eliminating them would be ideal, but as a parent, a lot is asked of you already. But falling into a pattern of convenience is what has lead our society to this point of overeating.

More important to know, the eating habits a child establishes when they are young, affect them for the rest of their life. If they begin eating fast and processed food from the start, their pallet craves that level of fat, salt, and sweet for the remainder of their life. Having to change your eating habits as an adult is quite difficult, as you may or may not know.

This is why it should be your priority as a responsible parent to instill in your child the preference for a healthy food from an early age.

THE SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS:

Avoid High Fructose Corn Syrup and Hydrogenated Oil.

Read ingredient labels! These two substances are used in many of the nutritionally empty processed foods, so by avoiding just these two simple ingredients, you eliminate the hassle of decision making.

Replace all white grains with brown.

Replace all white bread, pasta, and rice with whole wheat bread, pasta, and brown rice. These ingredients are just as easy to obtain as the white ones these days. And you’ll find them to be more flavorful than the white stuff. Look for the ones that are high in dietary fiber.

Start with a routine.

Creating a routine and a menu for cooking is a great way to structure meals you make at home. Make each day of the week a theme, like pasta night, etc. It will also make your grocery shopping trips quick and easy.

Once you’ve settled into the routine and schedule, you may find it easier to branch out and try new dishes.

Eat organic.

Organic food is generally a lot less processed and contains less stuff like HFCS and partially hydrogenated oil which you don’t need. This is one of many reasons to eat organic.

Remember, just because something is organic doesn’t mean it’s automatically healthier and you can eat as much as you want. You still need to control your portions with organic food.

Shop at local farmers markets.

Supporting your local farmers is one way as a consumer to have an effect on the food industry. Farmers markets tend to have really fresh produce, often it’s organic, and you can sample much of the produce before buying it.

Taking your children is one way to expose them to where food comes from.

Prepare fruit and vegetables when you get home from grocery shopping.

Cooking and eating healthy snacks can be easy if you set aside 30 minutes after getting home from the grocery store to clean and trim your fruits and vegetables and prepare them for when you will eat them.

The easier they are to get to, the more likely you are to eat them.

Reduce the number of nights you eat pre-prepared or boxed meals and out at restaurants.

While this is a simple how, the task of cooking more does become more difficult to make time for, but if you make cooking an event that involves every one in the family, eating a self prepared meal is much more rewarding. Kids can develop motor skills by helping you in the kitchen too.

Avoid the center aisles at the grocery store at all cost.

This is where most of the unhealthy food sits. If you avoid these aisles all together you avoid the risk of being tempted by your cravings.

Grocery stores are designed a certain way for a reason. Fresh produce on the outside aisles, long shelf life stuff on the inside aisles.

Avoid keeping unhealthy food in your house.

If you avoid bringing the unhealthy food into your house, chances are you won’t eat it. Teach your child that chips, packaged cookies, and sodas or fruit drinks are to be consumed on special occasions. Giving them boundaries in regards to not-so-healthy food will prevent unhealthy relationships with them in the future.

STEP ONE

If you see either High Fructose Corn Syrup or Partially Hydrogenated Soybean Oil, you can go ahead and put this food product down. If you don't find these items, move on to step two.

HFCS has already been discussed, but Partially Hydrogenated Oil is one of the man made products that has now been found to raise cholesterol and clog arteries. It's appearance in our food supply also coincides with the rise of obesity much like HFCS.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250 Calories from Fat 110

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g 18%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Trans Fat 1.5g

Cholesterol 30mg 10%

Sodium 470mg 20%

Total Carbohydrate 31g 10%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20%

Iron 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED FLOUR, SALT, WATER, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, BROWN SUGAR, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN OIL, ALMONDS, COCOA BUTTER, ARTIFICIAL FLAVORING & SOYA LECITHIN-AN EMULSIFIER.

STEP TWO

Know how much a serving before you look at the next steps. This is NOT the recommended serving amount. This is just the measurement the food company came up with to represent the government required information. Think of this serving size in regards to how much you eat.

Also, notice how many servings total are in the package.

STEP THREE

Calories represent the measurement of energy contained in the food. These are what you burn when you are active. Too many calories consumed combined with lack of activity can result in unhealthy weight gain.

Shoot for low calorie per serving food.

STEP FOUR

Too much Saturated Fats is a bad sign. Saturated fats are responsible for raising your risk of heart disease. If you found no Partially Hydrogenated Oil in step one, you shouldn't find any trans fats in this step.

Choose products high in dietary fiber and low in fat. Remember, fiber kills hunger for longer.

DON'T FALL INTO THE "HEALTHY FOOD" TRAP

Forget what the front of the box is screaming, your best resource and guide for choosing healthy food will always be the nutrition facts and ingredients label. Know how to use them to your advantage.

When you are at a grocery store, you will find a lot of foods with some kind of label on the front claiming to be a source of healthy food. That's because food companies know that while we are more aware of the poor health in our country, we are still ill-informed about how to make healthy food choices. They profit from keeping us confused.

In addition to the confusion, food companies also count on our strong desire for convenience. They know it's much easier to walk down an aisle and scan for the one that claims to be the most healthy. Taking that into account, food companies know how to use that to their advantage.

A great example is how often do you see "FAT FREE" plastered on a giant bag of candy. You know the candy is bad for you because of all the sugar, but because the product really doesn't contain any fat, the food company is able to claim it on their packaging. So, if they are able to do that on something you know for sure is bad for you, then what does that mean for products you are unsure about it's health value?

This is why arming yourself with the knowledge of how to read the nutritional information on all packages will keep you from falling into the "healthy food" trap. All information listed in this area is factual and accurate as dictated by the government. It is the part of the container you can trust.

The information to the left is a very basic breakdown on how you should read a label, but it is highly recommended that you find a good resource that tells you all of the details. At the end of this guide, there will be a list of additional resources.

SIMON'S HEALTHY PRIORITY #3

REDUCE FOOD PORTION SIZES

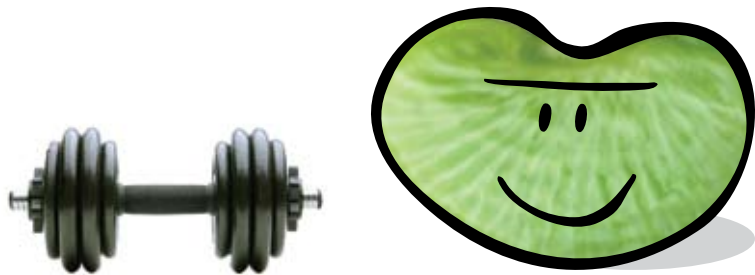
By reducing the size of your portions, you reduce the number of extra calories you consume in a day.

SIMON Tests His Strength

Simon Bean dreams of being a super hero. He soon finds a large plate full of food he tries to lift, but is unable to because it is just too big and full.

When he finds a smaller plate that is just as full as the large one and lifts it, he finally feels like a super hero. He learns that smaller is better.

This story is meant to help you explain why you shouldn't eat big portions.



LARGE PORTION SIZES

Foods sold in restaurants

Fast food meals

Movie theater food

Buffets

Full plates over 9" in diameter

Large, king, or jumbo labeled

The most important portion rule:



Wait 20 minutes before allowing yourself a second serving of food.

STOP FEELING LIKE YOU’RE GOING TO BUST

Decreasing your food portions sizes can help you achieve the correct feeling of fullness.

By reducing the size of your portions, you reduce the number of extra calories you consume in a day. Restaurants and food companies have caused a severe case of “eyes bigger than stomach” in this country to justify charging more for their cheaply made food. As the years have passed, portion sizes have increased, and as we continued to clean our plates, our waist lines have expanded.

It’s quite typical for people to walk away from a restaurant holding their gut and saying “Goodness, I am so STUFFED!” That is a very unhealthy way to walk away from a meal. Yet this is the norm for feeling full in our country. If someone were to show you an appropriate serving size, more than likely you would look at it and say “That is not enough to fill me.” This is because you have been conditioned to over eat and fill yourself to the point of being “stuffed.”

Ultimately you should only eat till you are pleasantly full. Most people do not know that it takes a full 20 minutes for your stomach to register with your brain that it is full. Which is why we have that tendency to clean our over sized plates and finish a meal feeling “stuffed.”



HOW TO CONTROL YOUR PORTIONS

There are many easy ways you can reduce your portions sizes. But the most important key is commitment. You need to recondition yourself to understand what is an appropriate serving size.

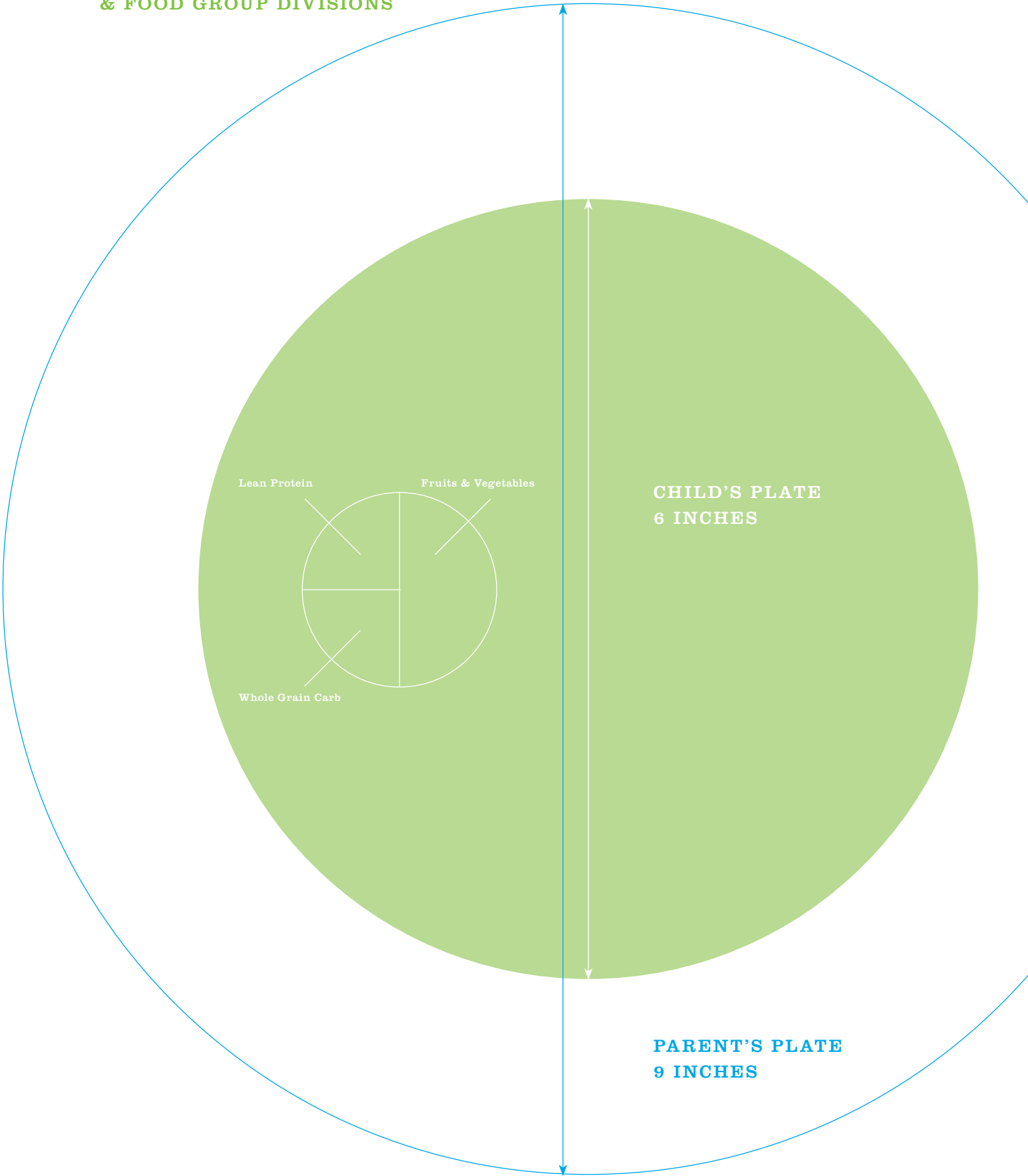
Don't forget, our environment is set up to make you fail, this is where you the consumer must take charge.

The first recommended way to control your portion sizes at home is to reduce the size of your plates. Most dinner plates today are as big as 12 inches in diameter but the appropriate size you should be using at home should be no bigger than 9 inches, or just slightly larger than the width of this page. Your child should be eating from plates no larger than 6 inches across, or the size of an appetizer plate.

At first it may feel strange to be eating from what you may consider to be such small plates. But keep reminding yourself that the small plate is actually the correct size, and the old plate was the wrong size. It's just a matter of tricking the eye. By filling your smaller plate, you'll feel like you are eating a lot of food, when in reality, you are controlling your portions.

Secondly, When placing food on your plate, think of your plate as having division lines. One half of that plate should be filled with fruits and/or vegetables. One quarter of that plate should have a lean protein. The other quarter should have a whole grain carbohydrate.

ACTUAL SIZES OF PLATES
& FOOD GROUP DIVISIONS



REDUCING PORTIONS OUTSIDE THE HOME

You do have control over how you eat beyond your own kitchen.

Outside of your home, you still have a lot of control over your portion sizes. Again, while these suggestions may at first seem difficult and strange, you must use your commitment to follow through and adopt them as norm.

Once the routine of choosing your own serving sizes becomes habit, making the right decisions won't feel so difficult. Expecting you to use measuring cups and spoons every meal is impractical. Learning to “eyeball” is a very easy way to control your portions.

Controlling your portion sizes is easy to do when you commit to the habit. It is important to instill this value in your child so that as they grow they won't fall into the trap set up by the toxic food environment.

THE SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS:

Chew Slowly.

This one will feel very strange in the beginning, but it so very important in controlling your portions. It can takes up to 20 minutes for your stomach to register with your brain that it is full.

Try putting your fork down between bites to re-enforce eating slowly.

Avoid the “Value Meals” at the fast food restaurants.

Always order the smaller sizes at fast food restaurants. Did you know that the kid sized meals at fast food restaurants today are actually the appropriate size for an adult meal? Keep this in mind when ordering for yourself and your children.

Order the small sizes of meals.

Ask for the lunch portion if there isn't a large dinner size alternative. You are the consumer, you have the power over what is given to you.

Also think of how choosing the smaller sizes will positively affect your pocketbook.

Split a meal with someone.

Meals served in restaurants are in most instances twice the size a single person should eat. If you are out with others, split a meal. You'll walk away feeling good that you didn't overeat and without that stuffed feeling you probably often feel.

Set aside half of your meal in a to-go box as soon as your food is brought.

If you are eating alone, this is an excellent way to cut your portion in half before you have time to put a fork to your mouth.

Put your snacks into a single serving bowl or on a plate.

Avoid eating your snacks straight out of a package. This way you have total control over how much you are eating. Try eating the snack in another room or place away from the package it came from, you'll think twice before going for seconds..

SIMON’S HEALTHY PRIORITY #4

ADOPT MORE ACTIVITY INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE

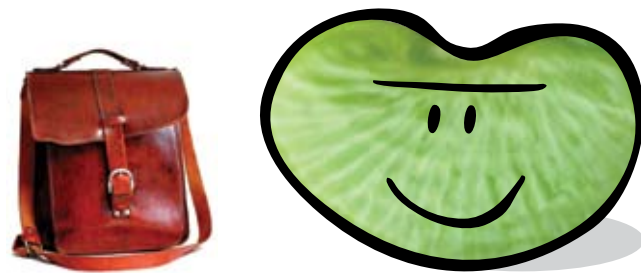
Once you have your food environment under control, you need to balance your calorie intake with a healthy amount of activity.

SIMON Goes on an Adventure

Simon Bean dreams of being an explorer. When he sets out to become one he finds a treasure map. This is where his adventure to find the treasure begins.

Following the map, Simon must go through an obstacle of activities and hopes that you and your child can join him in his hunt for the treasure.

This story is meant to get you and your child moving and to inspire adventures of your own.



FORMS OF INACTIVITY:

- Watching the television
- Driving
- Spending time on the computer
- Playing video games

Amount of physical activity needed:



Adults need at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.



Children need at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity a day.

A BENEFIT THAT GOES A LONG WAY

Providing your child with the habit of physical activity in their daily life will keep them from having to struggle with where to fit it in as they grow older.

Children need 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Establishing the daily habit of being active early in a child's life will ensure that finding time in their busy schedule as they grow older won't be a problem. If you yourself struggle with when and how to fit in physical activity, you may sympathize with this issue. Which is why it is critical that you too set the best example for your child and become physically active yourself.

It is also important to understand that "physical activity" doesn't only mean "going to the gym." Physical activity is defined as any activity that is not sedentary and gets the blood pumping. There are many physical activities that don't involve spending money. Going for a walk, dancing, going to a public park, gathering neighbors for a team sport, cleaning your house, doing yard work, and climbing stairs, just to name a few. If you have the resources, get involved with an adult recreation league.

If your child grows up understanding and possessing the value of physical activity, they will learn to pass that value on to their own children. Think of this as an opportunity to create a legacy in your family.



Kids exposure to food commercials:

\$10 BILLION

Spent by the food industry to influence eating behaviors of children.

TURN IT OFF AND GET UP

It is time to stop our love affair with the small screen.

The suggestion that we need to turn off our TVs is often viewed as un-American. As already stated, the television has become an integrated part of our lives and its importance to our cultural lifestyle is very high. But if we are to have any impact on the future health of our children, we need to start reducing the amount of television they watch. And if we are to be good roll models for our children, we too need to find TV alternative activities.

The same could be said for computers and video games. On one hand we want our children to be technologically advance and to be able to keep up with the ever changing world of technology, but it’s best to wait until they have built up a good habit of being active before introducing them to the computer or video games.

Televisions and computers promote a very sedentary lifestyle, mindless eating, and expose children to thousands of commercials. By advertising to children, food companies indirectly influence your purchasing decisions through your children whining for what they saw on the TV. Doing most non-screen related activity is better for our health than watching TV or sitting in front of a computer. Interacting with your children not only builds stronger bonds with them, but children also learn better doing than watching.

The list to the right should give you ideas of non-screen activities to do with your child. You may even find life more enjoyable once you start spending time away from the small screens.

NON-SCREEN ACTIVITIES:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Make puppets | Find a treasure | Jump rope |
| Put on a puppet show | Learn sign language | Build a snowman |
| Read a book | Study the animal kingdoms | Have a taste test |
| Plant a tree | Act out your favorite stories | Stand on your head |
| Make a cardboard animal zoo | Make a family calender | Start a growth chart on a doorway |
| Learn to become ambidextrous | Create a family flag | Pretend to be blind |
| Make cardboard animal footprints | Dance to your favorite music | Smell the roses |
| Get an ant farm | Draw pictures with your feet | Mix different flavors |
| Make up silly nicknames | Sing your favorite song 5 times fast | Build things out of popsicle sticks |
| Plan a trip | Go on a monster hunt | Paint a picture using leaves |
| Balance objects in your hand | Make up new animals | Pretend to drive somewhere |
| Balloon volleyball | Write a letter to a relative | Pick up toys and organize them |
| Plan dinner for a week | Press flowers | Make a treasure map |
| Make bean bags | Make your own jewelry | Create a paper ball pool |
| Have a bean bag olympics | Do cartwheels | Do somersaults |
| Make paper hats | Play Duck, Duck, Goose | Take a walk around the yard |
| Play picture bingo | Make hand shadows on the wall | Play the Silent Game |
| List objects in the room big to small | Create a family song | Make a secret handshake |
| Play With an Oversized Box | Go on a scavenger hunt | Start a sticker collection |
| Blow soap bubbles | Make musical instruments | Count as high as you can go |
| Make a list of silly dreams | Build a fort | Plant flowers |
| Tell jokes | Draw faces on your hands | Make potpourri |
| Build a city with empty cereal boxes | Create your own toys | Use chalk to draw on the sidewalk |
| Clean a room in the house | Go ride bikes | Balance on one leg |
| Make play-dough | Play Musical Chairs | Play Ring Around the Roses |
| Plan and plant a garden | Find four leaf clovers | Make a kids cooking kit |
| Start a coin collection | Make place mats for the table | Learn to ice skate |
| Draw or paint | Build an obstacle course | Create an imaginary friend |
| Play Freeze Frame | Go on an adventure around the house | Make silly faces at each other |
| Go cloud watching | Make paper airplanes | Take pictures |
| Experiment with color mixing | Take a bubble bath | Play Simon Says |
| Make your own memory game | Pretend to be a pet or other animal | Go sleigh riding |
| Trace your body’s outline | Go to the library | Make a cup and string telephone |
| Crayon rubbings of textures | Make a mask | Pretend to be really old |
| Cut out pictures from magazines | Bowling game with empty bottles | Start a dead bug collection |
| Write your own stories | Thumb wrestle | Go swimming |
| Play Hide-n-Seek | Create your own language | Kick a ball |
| Make a bird feeder from a milk carton | Make a wind chime | Have a staring contest |
| Create your own costumes | Play Telephone | |
| Go for a walk | Learn animal sounds | Come up with your own activity! |



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Create a partnership with your child.

The future health of our children depends on reconnecting the idea of where food comes from and what happens to your bodies during and after you eat.

1 OZ. OF PREVENTION = LBS. OF CURE

Make sure your child lives out their dreams, even the silly ones.

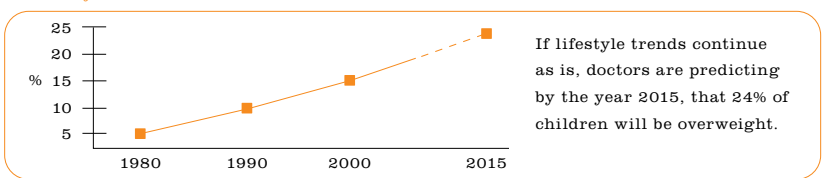
A very real threat looms for today's newest generation. Doctors and other health professionals are urging parents to take a stand. This stand can not be successful without a commitment to your own health. Use the opportunity of instilling the value of healthy habits in your child to instill these habits within yourself. Create a partnership with your child. Preventing unhealthy weight gain in your kids will benefit them in the long run, but it also has the potential of helping you with your own weight struggles if you have them.

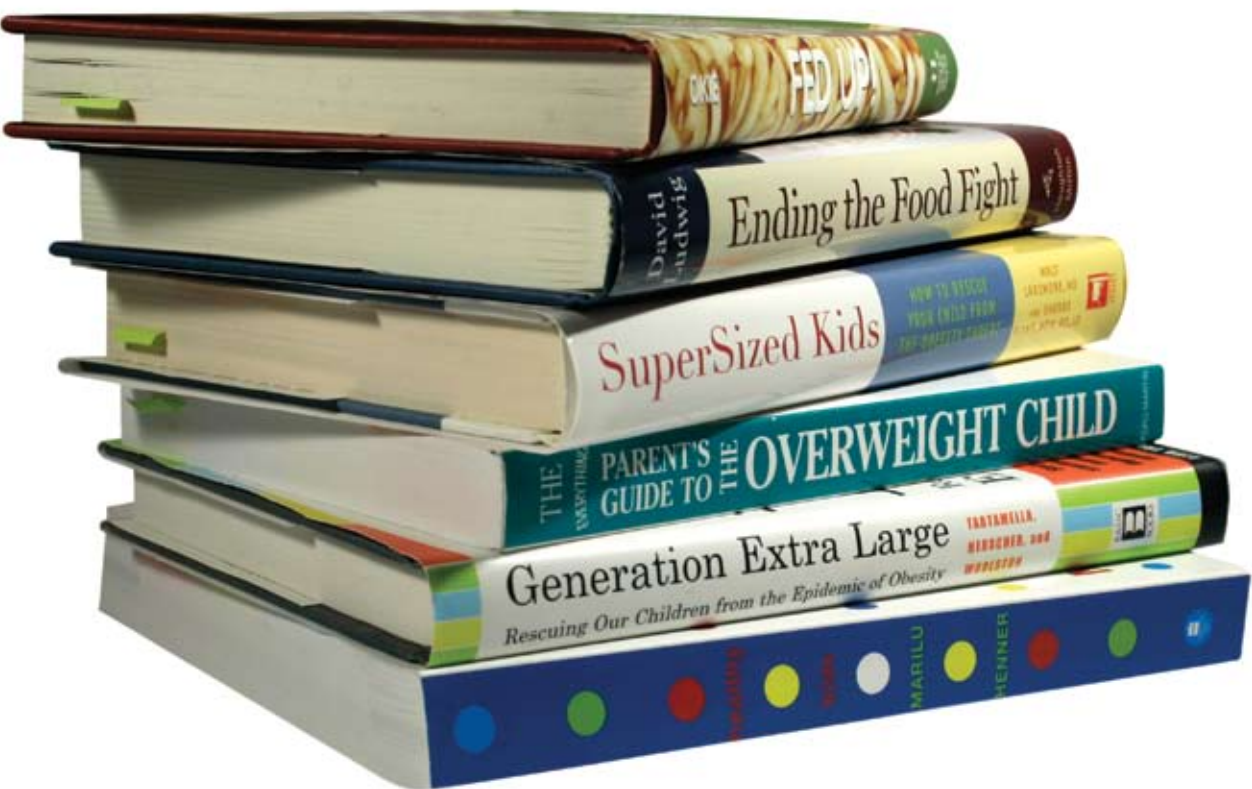
Your child may not learn a thing if you don't lead them by example, and then your struggles will become theirs as they get older. Use the strong feelings of love and concern for your child to adopt the healthy priorities taught by Simon into your whole family's life. This is the recipe for success: getting everyone involved.

It's time for people to use their power as consumer to have an influence over the food, media, and entertainment industry. This is where personal responsibility and your responsibility as a parent comes into play. The future health of our children depends on reconnecting the idea of where food comes from and what happens to your bodies during and after you eat.

By instilling healthy habits and making them a part of everyday life, much like getting into your car and automatically buckling your seat belt, you make the commitment to your child and yourself to prevent and address the harm that comes from gaining unhealthy weight.

Obesity rates in children:





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Build upon the blocks.

The Simon books and this guide are merely a gateway to the solution. There are many resources that exist which go into greater detail and will help you with your decision to adjust your unhealthy lifestyle. Do not be afraid to seek out assistance. The more you learn about healthy lifestyle habits and empower yourself, the easier it is to find ways to make good decisions. You may also discover just how subversive food companies and even our government have been in their contributions to the problem of unhealthy weight gain.

Feel free to adopt one of Simon’s healthy priority at a time. But always keep in mind why you are making these lifestyle adjustments; your child.

The following pages list additional resources like books or websites for you to consult if you find the need, as well as final suggestions you should take away from this book.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND FINAL SUGGESTIONS:

Books you may find very informative and quite helpful:

- Ending the Food Fight**
by Dr. David Ludwig
- Super Sized Kids**
by Dr. Walt Larimore & Sherri Flynt
- Healthy Kids**
by Marilu Henner
- The Everything Parent’s Guide to the Overweight Child**
by Paula Ford-Martin

Books you may find interesting if you really like to read:

- What to Eat**
by Marion Nestle
- Food Politics**
by Marion Nestle
- The Omnivore’s Dilemma**
by Michael Pollan
- In Defense of Food**
by Michael Pollan

Helpful websites:

- Small Step**
www.smallstep.org
- Healthier US**
www.healthierus.org
- Meals Matter**
www.mealsmatter.org
- The Daily Plate**
www.dailyplate.com

Helpful keyword online searches:

- Childhood Obesity
- Nutrition Label
- Meal Planning
- Local Parks + your city
- Toddler Nutrition
- Healthy Recipes
- Portion Control
- Fun Physical Activities
- Farmers Markets + your city

People you could talk to in order to share and exchange ideas:

- Doctor
- Nurse Practitioner
- Dietitian
- Nurse
- Neighbors
- Other Parents
- Friends
- Teachers

Spread the word.

The more people that get involved with this healthy movement, the more influence is had on industry and cultural values.

Evidence of this can be seen with the recent increase in organic food in supermarkets, now if only we could get rid of the unhealthy food.

Eat breakfast.

This is so very important to good health. Many people avoid this meal because they are in a hurry in the morning, think they are skipping extra calories they don't need, or “can't eat that early in the morning” But skipping breakfast robs your metabolism its kick start.

It truly is the most important meal of the day.

Get plenty of rest.

Getting your full 8 hour of sleep a night can also help keep unhealthy weight from sneaking up on you. Your body needs to re-charge itself in order to run smoothly. Not getting enough rest can cause your body to think you are under stress and need to store energy.

Don't use food as a reward. Don't use sweets to bribe your child to eat vegetables or fruits.

This is to prevent any unhealthy relationships with food. If you teach kids that food or candy is a reward, they will grow up rewarding themselves with extra calories (and pounds) they don't need.

Reward with activities and spending time with you.

Don't eat in front of the Television, eat as a family at the dinner table.

Interact with your family during dinner. You'll be surprised to find how rewarding it is to learn about eachother's day and how life is going. It also builds stronger family bonds.

Limit TV time to 7–14 hours a week.

This fact is just to give you a more exact number as well as goal to work towards as a family.

Remember food companies are looking to capitalize on you and your child through advertisements. This goes against adopting these new healthy lifestyle habits.

Do not put a TV in your child's room.

The goal should be to encourage less use of a television, not more use.

Drink a glass of water with every single meal.

Not only will this provide you with hydration, it helps control portions.

Set small goals.

If you are finding yourself needing to make drastic adjustments in yours and your child's lifestyle, start by setting small goals. As you achieve each goal, make a new one. This may take a while, but remember, a battle prevented is a battle won.

Become a food investigator.

Do you know why processed food is so cheap and healthy food is so expensive? Research government agriculture subsidies and the corn industry in America You might find an answer that may anger you and move you to act.

Know where your food comes from.

Get active.

Be a pioneer in your workplace, start a walking club, lobby for time in your day to step away from your desk to do something active.

Inspire others to do the same.

Enjoy eating.

Eating healthy foods can be just as fulfilling as eating all the sweet, salty, and fat ridden processed foods that many people “live” off of now.

If you don't have easy access to the fresh produce that you need to change your lifestyle habits, become an activist in your community and make a difference for yourself, your children, and your neighbors.

Don't diet.

Your goal is to make a lifestyle adjustment, not to lose weight. If you eat healthy and involve yourself with physical activity out of habit, you get all the benefits that go along with it (including a healthy weight).

Diets are not a lifestyle, they are a temporary fix.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Just a designer who wants to make a difference.

Liana Lawrance grew up in the mountains of Virginia. When she moved to San Francisco, California to attend grad school, she experienced a bit of culture shock. Once the shock subsided, she developed an interest in defining American culture. During her search for this definition, Liana discovered that Americans loved to eat. She learned that what Americans were eating combined with a mostly sedentary lifestyle was having a negative effect on their health. When she realized the impact of that effect on young children, Liana felt compelled to do something about it. With a strong passion for food, being active, and a desire to impact others in a positive way, Liana created Simon Bean.

Liana's motivation behind the Simon series and the Eat & Act organization is to re-direct American culture with a new icon that creates excitement around healthier habits for America's next generation.

When she's not solving problems with design, Liana spends her time cooking, reading, watching movies, exploring San Francisco, or having fun with her friends. She hopes to one day raise healthy and happy children of her own.