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**Am I Hungry? E-Newsletter
April 2005**



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http://www.amihungry.com/pdf/newsletter_04_05.pdf)

Preventing obesity in the next generation...

This jam-packed issue of our Am I Hungry? E-Newsletter is devoted to children in celebration of the release of "H is for Healthy – Weight Management for Kids" <http://www.amihungry.com/book.shtml>. You'll find articles to help you prevent obesity in the children (and future adults!) in your life, a great family recipe for make-your-own Rustic Grilled Pizzas, and links to great resources for your family and patients.

We also have two new features. The first is "May I Ask?" This is your opportunity to ask Michelle May, M.D., Lisa Galper, Psy.D., and Janet Carr, M.S., R.D. your weight management questions. The other is "Health Professionals Resources" including information about Training and Licensing to facilitate Am I Hungry? workshops in your area.

May 6th is International No Diet Day. No Diet Day was established to challenge the cultural attitudes and values that contribute to chronic dieting, weight preoccupation, eating disorders, and size discrimination. If you are in the Phoenix area, please join us for a workshop and book signing at 7 p.m. on May 6th at Borders 870 N. 54th St. in Chandler

Wishing you optimal health and joy!

Michelle May, M.D.

Helping Children Become "Good" Eaters

"My child just isn't a good eater!" frustrated parents sometimes tell me during their son or daughter's well child check-up. This means different things to different parents – perhaps their child is very picky, or eats only small amounts at a time. After I have examined the child, and we have looked at their growth chart to confirm that they are growing well, we discuss what being "a good eater" means. As a Family Physician who also deals with many adults who are overweight, I know that parents sometimes unwittingly set the stage for food and weight problems later in life.

Ironically, though there is more information available about nutrition than ever before, overweight and obesity in adults is epidemic in our society. The number

of obese children and teens has doubled in the last 20 years, yet at the same time, we are seeing a frightening number of young women with serious eating disorders. Our society is plagued by convenient food on every corner, technology that has replaced playing outside, busy families rushing in multiple directions, and an over-emphasis on our outward physical appearance as a measure of our worth.

Our goal as parents is to raise healthy, happy children, so let's look at how we can help them become "good" eaters – and carry those skills into adulthood too!

Remember, from the moment they are born, our children have the ability to know when they are hungry – and they cry to let *us* know too! Of course, they also cry to let us know they are wet, hurt, or bored, but we soon learn to tell the difference and try to meet each need appropriately. When we begin to feed them solid foods, they let us know when they have had enough by turning away from the spoon – or spitting the food back at us! As toddlers, they seem to be in perpetual motion, barely stopping long enough to eat a handful of fish crackers here, and a few slices of banana there.

Why is it that once children are old enough to sit at the table their parents are often overheard bribing and threatening them to finish all their dinner? When we make our children clean the plate that *we* filled, we are teaching them to ignore their innate ability to know how much, and what, their bodies need. Instead, we should allow them to use *their* own hunger cues to determine how much they need, while *we* provide a balance of nutritious and "fun" foods. When we teach them about moderation and set a great example by living an active, healthy lifestyle, they will be less likely to develop weight problems later in life. Think of your slim friend who eats whatever she wants - but will turn down ice cream if she has had enough to eat!

"Eat all your dinner if you want dessert" translates to "you must overeat so I will reward you by letting you overeat some more!" By using sweets as a reward for good behavior or to bribe them into finishing the whole meal, kids begin to believe sweets are *really* special and they may want them even more. Instead, by making dessert just another (small) part of an enjoyable meal, kids learn to "save room for dessert" instead of becoming a member of the "clean plate club."

Parents' pressure to eat certain foods and certain portion sizes can cause the dinner table to become a battleground. At my house, we have a "Two Bite Rule" - everyone must try two bites of whatever we are having for dinner. This takes the pressure off of us as parents since it is "The Rule". And surprisingly, by the second bite, our children often discover that most things taste pretty good – even if they are green! We don't make them clean their plate or teach them that foods are "bad" or "good" – but we do teach them that making healthy food choices will help them reach their full potential.

In short, it is *not* our job as parents to know how much food a child should eat at any given time, or to *make* them eat something because it is “good” for them. Instead, it is our responsibility to teach our children about healthy eating, to provide them with a variety of tasty, nutritious choices, to set a good example by our own eating habits, and most importantly, to make meals a pleasant time to bond as a family. That’s the best way to help your child *grow up* to be a “good” eater too!

Just released: “H is for Healthy – Weight Management for Kids”

By Michelle May, M.D. and Eileen Tucker Cosby and illustrated by Norma S. Strange (SWAK Pak, 2005)

One of the most important lessons children can learn is how to care for their bodies. When the focus is on health rather than on weight or appearance, children develop respect for themselves and others. “*H is for Healthy – Weight Management for Kids*” is a fun way to teach and reinforce the importance of healthy eating, an active lifestyle, and unconditional acceptance of their bodies. These healthy attitudes and behaviors are invaluable gifts that will last a lifetime.

H is for Healthy features diverse characters and Spanish translation. Take a peak inside or order your copies today! <http://www.amihungry.com/book.shtml> .

Rustic Grilled Pizza – a blast for the whole family!

Shopping, preparing food, and eating together are the most powerful ways to teach your children healthy eating habits – and good communication skills. Try this awesome recipe for make-your-own Rustic Grilled Pizzas by Owen May, certified chef (and yes, husband of Michelle May!). Click below:
http://www.amihungry.com/pdf/rustic_pizza.pdf

Send us your original Rustic Grilled Pizza topping combos and you will be entered to win an autographed copy of “H is for Healthy – Weight Management for Kids.” Send your cleverly named creations to Info@AmIHungry.com.

Am I Hungry? What to Do When Diets Don’t Work is now available in E-Book PDF format. Download to read right now:

<http://www.profcs.com/app/netcart.asp?MerchantID=59012&ProductID=2246251>

Free Kids Fitness DVD: Order your free interactive DVD targeted to children ages 5-9 and their families called *Max’s Magical Delivery: Fit for Kids* at

<http://www.ahrq.gov/child/dvdobesity.htm>

Websiting: <http://www.BAM.gov> Body and Mind (BAM) includes interactive tools and info about fitness, nutrition, stress management, peer pressure and other relevant info for adolescents; sponsored by the Center for Disease Control.

Websiting: <http://www.verbnow.com> Verb™ – it’s what you do. Fun, interactive site for kids that makes play and physical activity totally cool; sponsored by the Center for Disease Control.

Resources for Health Professionals

Training and Licensing: We will soon begin training and licensing facilitators to conduct Am I Hungry? workshops in your area. Please send an email to Dr. May at MMay@AmIHungry.com if you would like to be added to our database to receive more information about this great opportunity to make a difference.

Patient Education Handout (two pages): [Keys to Prevent and Treat Childhood Weight Problems](#) (or paste this link into your browser: <http://www.amihungry.com/pdf/keys.pdf>)

Earn free CME at www.DiscoveryHealthCME.com. Includes Childhood Obesity: Combating the Epidemic at <http://discoveryhealthcme.discovery.com/childhoodobesity/childhoodobesity.html> and Adult Obesity: Reversing the Trend, featuring Michelle May, M.D. and other weight management experts at <http://discoveryhealthcme.discovery.com/adultobesity/adultobesity.html>.

Am I Hungry? Workshops

What To Do When Diets Don’t Work: If you are in the Phoenix area, join us for our eight-week Am I Hungry?™ workshop beginning June 6th. You can change your lifestyle—and your life—in just 90 minutes a week. These workshops fill up quickly so don’t delay! Send an email to Info@AmIHungry.com or call 480 704-7811.

What To Do When Life Gets In the Way: Ever notice that despite your best intentions your weight management plan sometimes falls apart when life gets in the way? Join Drs. May and Galper for motivating and eye-opening teleseminars to develop the skills you need to become an effective lifelong weight manager. The next one is Building Healthy Emotions on May 4th. These live interactive teleseminars are delivered to you by phone in the comfort of your home, office, or even hotel room. To learn more and register, go to <http://www.amihungry.com/workshops.shtml> or email info@AmIHungry.com.

New Feature: May I Ask?

Ask Michelle May, M.D., Lisa Galper, Psy.D., and Janet Carr, M.S., R.D. your weight management questions. Submit your questions to Info@AmIHungry.com.

Leslie Asks: “My 12 year-old, pre-teen daughter seems to be gaining weight at a rapid pace. How many calories a day should she be eating?”

Dr. May Answers: Unless there is a serious concern about malnutrition, focusing on a specific calorie intake or a specific weight at this stage (or any stage for that matter) can lead to other problems. Studies have shown that eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia may start with an innocent attempt to diet and control weight. Besides, dieting is generally ineffective. Studies have shown that adolescents who diet actually gain more weight than their peers. In my work in weight management with adults, I have also seen that dieting leads to a preoccupation with food and the development of abnormal eating patterns that are often carried into adulthood.

If you are concerned that your daughter is gaining too much weight, I encourage you to take her in for a check up with your family doctor. However, make sure that the visit is “health focused,” not “weight focused.”

At home, be sure to provide plenty of healthy meals and snacks and set a good example with your own eating habits. However, never make certain foods “bad” or “forbidden,” since that only increases their desirability. Be sure to provide plenty of opportunity for physical activity – even if that means going along for a bike ride or game of tennis. And, most importantly, during this time of inevitable struggles as she becomes a healthy adult, be sure that your home is a place of unconditional love and acceptance.

Sign up for this Am I Hungry? E-newsletter or read all of the practical and content-packed back issues at <http://www.amihungry.com/eneews.shtml>.

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