Building a Healthier Family...

Making changes that will last a lifetime

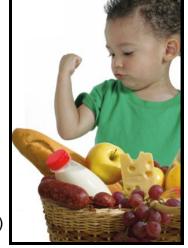
Well, it's mid-January...diets are underway and the gyms are full! After all, THIS new diet fad or exercise trend is revolutionary! Right?

Unfortunately, for most people, in just a few weeks they will be pondering what they intended to resolve in the first place. I think this is because the majority of us can commit to any radical change for a short-period of time, but is an unrealistic expectation to carry out for an extended length of time.

So, I would like to challenge you to incorporate changes that will last a lifetime for you and your family! I understand none of this information is new, but repetition is a great learning tool!

Where to start?

- Take an inventory of your family's lifestyle. What do y'all typically eat in a week? Are your treats truly a "treat" or have they become part of your everyday (or every meal)? How many fruits and
 - vegetables can your child name in the produce aisle?
- Know your body mass index (BMI), including your children's: The CDC has a great tool to calculate the BMI of adults, as well as a separate tool for children and teens. (see resources)



Now what?

- * Be a role model for your children. Are you asking them to do something that you are not willing to change for yourself?
- * Eat meals together, away from distractions...

 "unplug" for a few minutes and request that your children do the same.
- Incorporate your children into the meal planning and preparation. Remember, it is one of our roles as a parent to instruct our children, including healthy eating habits.
 - ✓ Increase fiber
 - ✓ Drink more water
 - ✓ Bake & broil instead of fry
 - ✓ Eat lean chicken, fish and beans
 - ✓ Add more fruits & vegetables
- ★ Decrease screen time...how many hours do you and your children spend on the phone, in front of the computer, watching television or playing video games?
- Increase physical activity (take a walk together,try a new sport, play a game...make it fun!)

Resources:

Eating Well

BMI tool for children and teens

BMI tool for adults

National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute

United States Dept of Agriculture