



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – To be active

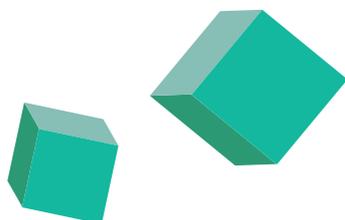
## The benefits of being active?

Physical activity prevents several diseases and the brain functions are positively affected. Effect is seen on both physical and mental health. Moving in any way is the most important thing, how or what is the less important part about it. By moving, you can become happier, less stressed, sleep better and feel full of energy. The body should be strong enough to cope with the daily life of school (later in life, with work) and leisure.

Children who build a strong body benefit from it throughout life. The skeleton is strengthened by being loaded during movement at a young age. The movement also strengthens muscles and lungs and improves mobility, balance and body control. The child's thinking ability and brain development are stimulated. In the longer term, certain forms of cancer, dementia and other diseases are prevented. Our bodies are made to move!

## Tips for better movement habits

- Not everyone wants or needs to practice a particular sport.
- Do things together. Find the joy of movement.
- Listen to what your child thinks is fun and encourage it.
- Access to a ball, frisbee or a jump rope can start the energy for play and movement.
- Walk or bike instead of taking the car. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Encourage outdoor play.
- Go to the forest, the beach or the park. Discover the surroundings and experience nature.
- Pedometer or activity book can give an idea of how active you are during a week and can be motivating for more movement.



## How much should children and young people move?

All children and youngsters are recommended at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, heart rate-boosting activities at least three times a week and activities that load the skeleton and muscles at least three times a week.

## Want to know more or get help?

The school nurse can give tips and advice or refer you further if the child has obstacles to move, for example, due to pain, disabilities, difficulties with motor skills and body awareness.

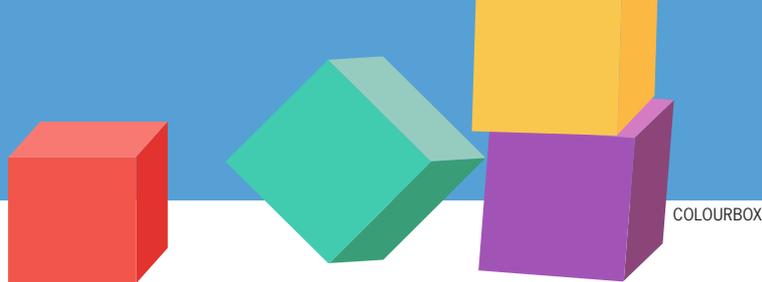
Physiotherapist/rehab clinic can be found through 1177.se.

Read *Hjärnstark junior: smartare gladare, starkare (Brain strong junior: smarter happier, stronger)* by Anders Hansen and Mats Wänblad which was published 2020 on Bonnier fakta.

Visit Generation pep at [www.generationpep.se](http://www.generationpep.se).

Read *Varför idrott och fysisk aktivitet är viktigt för barn och ungdom – fakta och argument (Why sports and physical activity are important for children and youth – facts and arguments)*, published by Riks idrottsförbundet. Download the brochure at [www.rf.se](http://www.rf.se).





# OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

## Why should overweight and obesity be addressed?

Preventing being overweight and obesity is equally important as preventing other diseases. Being overweight is not identified and treated for the sake of appearance or to achieve beauty ideals and the like, but because the risks of bad health are so great. Obesity often leads to high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. No one should be bullied or in any way be exposed because of their weight, so together we must try to counteract this.

Overweight and obesity are increasing. Today, approximately every fifth school child in Sweden is overweight or obese, which leads to both physical and mental illness in the short and long term. Child obesity is very likely to lead to bad health in adulthood. Treatment is more effective the sooner it is taken. Therefore, support for children and young people who develop overweight should be given as early as possible.

Growth checks with the school nurse are important because it is a good health marker. As a guardian, you may not even have noticed the weight gain since you see the child every day and the increase occurs gradually. With more and more overweight people in society, we do not always see the child as overweight, so it can come as a surprise when the school nurse notes that. It is mainly changes, when the weight suddenly increases more than expected, that the school nurse pays attention to. At the age of five to seven, children have a "slim period", where it is completely normal to be able to count the ribs. Many parents worry unnecessarily at this age that the child is eating too little.

## What should I do if my child is overweight?

- Good exercise, food and sleep habits are important for everyone regardless of weight and should preferably be established early.
- Pay attention to and address other problems, such as mental illness or social situation, which can indirectly lead to being overweight by affecting health choices.
- Involve friends, parents, relatives and school staff to get support and work to ensure that you have a common ground to deal with weight and lifestyle.
- Children often want to help themselves and be able to jump and climb like other children. Our task then becomes to ensure that they can do it and give the child strengthened self-esteem.
- Recommendations for physical activity should be achieved even if it does not affect weight. The body becomes stronger and many diseases are prevented. If the child is not used to moving, start at a low level and increase gradually.
- The goal is for the child to not gain weight, or grow more in length than the weight increases. In this way, the BMI (body mass index) curve begins to point in the right direction and a healthy weight can be achieved in the long term.

## Want to know more or get help?

Healthy lifestyle choices are good for everyone regardless of weight. Do not hesitate to contact the school nurse for advice and support and to get answers to your questions.

A physiotherapist can be found via [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se) and is to be contacted if the child is experiencing discomfort due to his/her weight or has difficulties with body control and movements.

Find out what help is available where you live, it can be a little different in different parts of the country with support groups, physical activity on prescription and so on.

Visit the patient organization Riksförbundet HOBS – Hälsa oberoende av storlek (Health regardless of size) at [www.HOBS.se](http://www.HOBS.se)

Search for *Övervikt och fetma i barn* (overweight and obesity in children) at [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se).



# SLEEP

## The benefits of good sleep habits

Sleep is important for everyone, especially for growing children and young people. Growth hormone is secreted during sleep, therefore sleep is important for normal growth. A rested child becomes more attentive, concentrated, calm and thus is better able to focus, solve problems and learn in school. The child generally feels and performs better. The ability to manage their mood and regulate their emotions improves. Stress resistance increases. The conditions for feeling good and being happy increase.

Getting enough sleep facilitates the body's regulation of certain substances in the body, regulation of hunger and fullness, which is positive for the immune system and provides resistance to certain diseases. Sleep provides recovery for the body and the brain. Children's brains develop a lot, which makes resting even more important and the need for sleep greater than in adults.

## How much should my child sleep?

The need for sleep can have individual variations. For children of preschool age, twelve to thirteen hours per night are recommended. From six to twelve years the need is ten to eleven hours per night and from twelve years and upwards, eight to ten hours per night. Some may have a greater need for sleep during puberty. Development and growth require a lot of recoveries. Your child/teen may need your support to get enough sleep.

## Tips for better sleep and sleep habits

- Be outdoors for a while every day in daylight.
- Be physically active during the day.
- Avoid too large meals too close to bedtime.
- Avoid invigorating drinks such as coffee, cola and energy drinks.
- Try to have a specific evening routine.
- Let your eyes rest from screen light for about an hour before bedtime.
- The bed should be a place associated with sleep – a place to sleep and nothing else.
- The room should be cool, dark and quiet.
- Put the phone in a room other than the bedroom, otherwise it easily becomes a subconscious stress factor.
- Have as many regular habits as possible.

## Want to know more or get help?

Students who experience sleep problems can get help from the school nurse.

Read more on [www.unglivsstil.se](http://www.unglivsstil.se)

Read about children's sleep at different ages on [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se).

Read about sleep and sleep disorders for teens on [www.umo.se](http://www.umo.se)

# HEALTHY FOOD

## – to eat well

### The benefits of good food

Through food we get our energy, that's why growing children and young people need nutrients that act as building blocks in the body. A well-balanced diet is of great importance for health, both by maintaining good health and by preventing diseases. Healthy food can also improve functions such as concentration, learning and memory. With a varied diet, we take in fiber, vitamins, minerals and other important substances, each of which is important in contributing to us feeling good.

### How to eat well

- Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as one to two snacks.
- Try to eat as regularly as possible.
- Lunch and dinner can be served according to *the plate model*.
- Eat five fruits or servings of vegetables a day! Children over ten years and young people should eat 500 grams of fruits and vegetables per day. For younger children, the recommendation is 400 grams.
- Water is the best thirst quencher and has many important functions in the body.

### Tips for better eating habits

- Try to eat with your child and without any disturbing phones and screens.
- “The keyhole” marking helps you make wise choices.
- One serving – one person. As a rule, one serving is enough, if the child does not play many sports. The one who do not feel full can take more vegetables or a fruit.
- Avoid eating too much sugar. Sweets, in moderation, can be a golden edge at any time of the week.



### Want to know more or get help?

Feel free to contact the school nurse for tips and support.

The school nurse or school doctor can refer you further to other healthcare institutions in the event of food intolerances, eating disorders, obesity or other food problems which are related to a health problem.

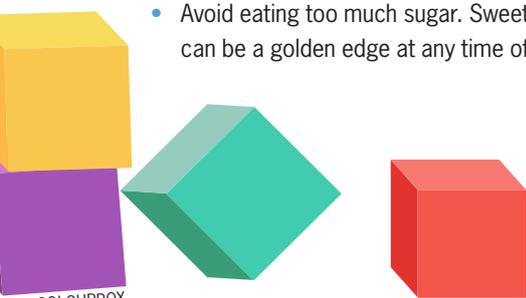
Read *Dietary advice for 2–17 years* at [www.livsmedelsverket.se](http://www.livsmedelsverket.se).

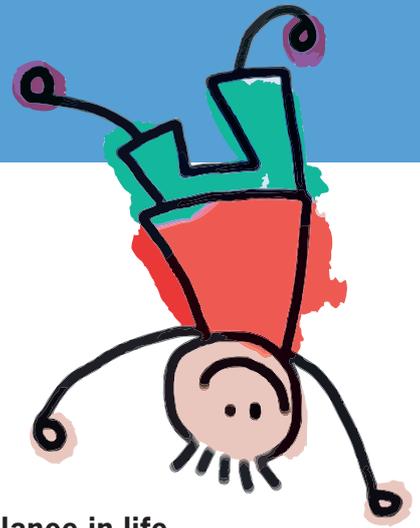
Make eating habits and get tips on how you can improve eating habits. You can find it at [www.livsmedelsverket.se/matvanor-halsa-miljo/kostrad/matvanekollen](http://www.livsmedelsverket.se/matvanor-halsa-miljo/kostrad/matvanekollen).

Read about diet at [www.unglivsstil.se](http://www.unglivsstil.se).

Read *Bra att veta om näring (Good to know about nutrition)* at [www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se)

Read about healthy eating habits at [generationpep.se/sv/fakta-rad](http://generationpep.se/sv/fakta-rad).





# BALANCE IN LIFE

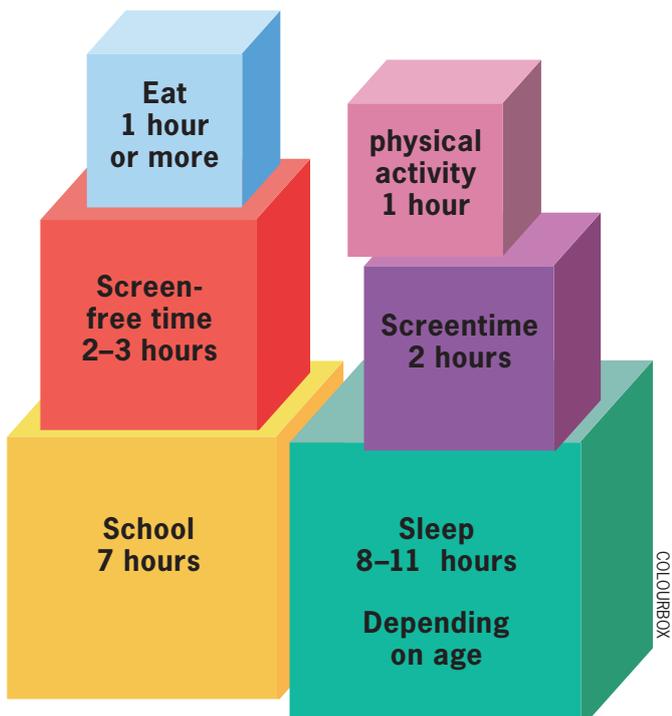
## The benefits of positive lifestyle choices and having balance in life

Taking care of oneself and the body in a good way can act as a kind of vaccine against feeling mentally ill, against being anxious, sad, depressed. In any case, it is a very good start.

Taking care of your body in a good way also protects the body from feeling physically ill and many diseases can be prevented. Both sleep and physical activity protect against mental illness. Good eating habits are also important for feeling good. You as a guardian can help your child to have good habits and thus better health.

## How can the hours of the day be distributed?

The day should be divided between food, sleep, school, exercise/leisure and spending time with friends. A suitable division for children and young people can be: to sleep ten to eleven hours at age six to twelve and eight to ten hours from age thirteen, meals one hour (or more), school seven hours, screen-time two hours, physical activity one hour and screen-free time two to three hours.



## Tips for getting balance in life

- Follow recommendations on healthy eating, physical activity and sleep.
- Encourage your child to continue with sports activities, especially during adolescence when many people stop playing sports.
- Set aside time for recovery, "to just be", reflecting and doing things you enjoy.
- Even if the child protests, you need to help the child limit his screen time.
- Take control of your own screen time and simply turn off your phone for a few hours when you want to be focused on your family. The children will appreciate it.
- Choose good things, that strengthen your health, when you want to celebrate something or reward your child.
- Stimulate your child's creativity and talents.
- Spending time together within the family can strengthen and develop your relationships.
- Encourage your child to be in relationships where they feel good.

## Want to know more or get help?

Contact the school nurse for more advice and support.

Read more at [www.unglivsstil.se](http://www.unglivsstil.se)

Read more at [www.generationpep.se](http://www.generationpep.se)

