

moderation, Pinos said. When there is a holiday, such as Halloween or Valentine's Day when your kids have stockpiles of candy, Pinos recommends separating the bulk of it into smaller batches and putting it in baggies.

"You lay it all out, and you put 5 to 7 pieces in each bag, and you give each kid one bag each week," she said. "They can choose to eat all the pieces in one day and not have any until the next week or they can give themselves one piece a day. It's teaching them to control themselves. You should freeze the rest of the bags so they are not as easily eaten on a whim."

The most important piece of teaching kids good habits is being a good role model.

"If you tell them to eat their broccoli but you never eat it, they won't either, Pinos said. "Kids learn everything — good and bad — by observation."

An important piece to this puzzle is family meals, she said.

"Every family should have at least one family meal a day," she said. "It's proven that there is no statistical difference between no family meals and 3-4 a week, so you have to do it every day or at least five or six days a week."

If you remember memorizing the Food Pyramid and how frustrating that was, Pinos said My Plate will help by keeping it simple. The My Plate method is based on the Food Pyramid but is explained in simpler terms and in a much easier to visualize manner.

"You start with a 9 in. plate, which is about the size of a salad plate," Pinos said. "Our plates are getting bigger and bigger but 9 in. is big enough for any meal. You fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, 1/4 with protein and 1/4 with grains and then you can have a small one cup serving of dairy products like yogurt or milk."

Pinos said she recently taught the My Plate method to fourth

graders at Stewart School, and it's a great tool for kids.

"They instantly understood it," she said. "If they understand fractions, they'll get it right away."

If your child is already overweight or obese and a doctor has confirmed that, Pinos said the best action plan would be to get a referral to a dietitian and work closely with your child's doctor and dietitian on a healthy plan.

"Do not put your child on a diet," she said. "You encourage more physical activity and offer better food choices, but you don't cut back on the amount of calories a child consumes. You want to maintain the weight they are at and let them grow into it, always making sure they are getting enough calories."

You also never want to single a child out, Pinos said.

"That sort of thing leads to eating disorders and self-confidence issues," she said. "Make it a whole family event, something every one should be doing anyway no matter what their size. It's never wrong to eat right and get more physical activity. It can be a good way to build good family memories."

Once you have healthy eating on the agenda, it's time to add physical activity into the mix. Summit Activities Center fitness instructor Tracie Moeller said the best way to motivate kids to move is to get involved with them and do it right along side them.

"Turn the TV and video games off and go outside," she said. "One of my kids said the best thing I've done for him is hide the TV and game remotes."

Kids will naturally get physical activity from just playing outdoors, Moeller said.

"You don't have to have an entire fitness routine developed for

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