

FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form.

Healthy Lifestyles for Spina Bifida

Eating well and keeping active are important for health and help to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Being of a healthy weight is important for everyone and is especially important for people living with Spina Bifida. Being too heavy (overweight or obese) makes it harder to stay mobile and care for yourself.

Being a healthy weight makes it easier to:

- Stay independent with mobility and moving around.
- Do daily tasks such as bathing and dressing.
- Reduce the risk of pressure injuries.
- Manage bladder and bowel (continence).
- Join in fun activities.

The whole family can be involved in making healthy food choices. Making changes is hard and doing it as a family can make it easier to keep up the changes. Some families also find it more achievable to make one change at a time. Long lasting change takes time and you may have setbacks along the way. The important thing is that you keep working towards healthy eating and being active every day.

There are some good fact sheets available on the Sydney Children's hospital network website with more information about healthy eating, weight management and activity for people with Spina Bifida. They are available at: www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets

There are factsheets on:

Healthy Eating

- A healthy lifestyle for a healthy weight
- Healthy eating for toddlers
- Managing toddler meal times
- For my adolescent with a weight problem: Where to from here?
- For my child with a weight problem: Where to from here?
- Healthy snack choices
- How to talk to kids about weight
- Losing weight: Why the whole family needs to be involved
- Preventing holiday weight gain – Managing the school holiday period
- Weight management tips for parents: Helping your adolescent to lose weight
- Your child: Their sleep and their weight

Being active

- Be active with Spina Bifida

If you need more help with making healthy eating changes a dietitian can provide you with specific advice based on your family situation. Ask your doctor for a referral to a dietitian or visit www.daa.asn.au to find a private dietitian near you. Please be aware that there are costs involved in seeing dietitians outside the hospital however, often you can make an appointment sooner than with a hospital dietitian.

For further information about weight management and diet:

There are a series of factsheets about Spina Bifida that can be found at

www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets

The Healthy Kids website

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au has lots of tips for healthy snacks, recipes, activities and ways to get the whole family involved.

Remember:

Healthy eating and keeping active is important for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Being a healthy weight makes it easier to keep doing everyday things.

It's best if the whole family can be involved in making healthy food and activity changes.