



5 Goals for Creating a Family Health Plan

We all know how important it is to guard our health, but when was the last time you considered making a health plan for your family? Drawing up simple, realistic goals for your family to achieve and maintain good health can lay the groundwork for a lifetime of excellent health habits.

“I strongly recommend that parents take the time to create health goals for their families,” said North Texas Pediatrics physician, Dr. Amy Pass. “Do your goals include weight loss, strength training, fine motor skill development, stronger immune systems, healthy snacks, adding more fruits & vegetables to your diet? Whatever your goals may be for you and your children, now is the time to define them and implement them.”

5 Goals Every Family Health Plan Needs:

- 1. Improving eating habits** – change fast food habits, limit eating to mealtimes, have healthy snacks ready, track daily fruits & veggies, track water consumption, consider vitamins & minerals supplements if needed. Involve your teen in meal planning, shopping and prep to foster ownership of the health goals.
- 2. Increasing an active lifestyle** – find ways to be active without the stress of more busyness. Use your resources: gym membership, bike path, good sidewalks, elliptical, dog who needs walking, playground, pool or baseball diamond. Younger kids with lots of energy to burn should get to pick the activity once in awhile.
- 3. Limiting electronics** – as more and more scientific data points to [electronics linked to depression in children](#). Track how much screen time each person is getting and set limits. If your child is truly addicted to electronics, expect some withdrawal symptoms the first two weeks. Also, take time to become educated about online safety for your children.
- 4. Tracking healthcare needs** – plan well-child visits, immunizations, dentist, and eye care. Look into state and local services if money is an issue.

5. Considering mental and spiritual health – try relaxation techniques, read-alouds or audiobooks, and relaxing vacations. Doing fun things together helps everyone decompress from a stressful day and feel more centered.

Benefits of Family Health Goals

Wondering why you should bother with all this? There are sound reasons to work toward health goals including:

- Good health habits carry into adulthood
- Good health means better energy for pursuing opportunities
- Increased sense of satisfaction and success
- Added family unity and cohesiveness
- Creating bonding and special memories
- Builds character traits such as persistence and work ethic
- Builds a sense of ownership in protecting your health
- Great way to cope with stress

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Make a habit of sitting down together to eat as a family, with positive conversation.
- Do volunteer work together as a family for your favorite charity. The more physically active, the better.
- Set regular bedtime hours and stick to it. “School-aged children need 9-12 hours of sleep to be healthy,” said Dr. Pass. “Preschoolers need even more and teens don’t function well with sleep deprivation. So it’s up to the parents to make sure this happens each night.”
- Make a food log for each person for one week. Be sure to include snacks and drinks – everything that was consumed in a day. Review it and outline changes needed.
- Make meal planning fun. Incorporate other cultures for healthy cuisine including fruits and vegetables.
- Don’t forget to bring the family along with you! While it may be unrealistic to think that each personality type will readily embrace change, they will soon see the benefits for themselves. Then, you can use their energy to keep the goals going.

Get Help Today

To help you get started, call North Texas Pediatrics at (214) 553-0705 to find out what immunizations are needed and when your next well-child visit should be. “We have resources to help you make great health goals for your family, so call us to schedule a check-up and let’s get going on the road to seeing some positive health benefits for your family,” said Dr. Pass.

Meet Dr. Amy Pass

Dr. Amy Pass is a board-certified pediatrician specially-trained in pediatric hematology/oncology. She loves seeing newborns and children of all ages, including school-aged children with behavior concerns, as well as adolescents. Dr. Pass loves getting to know

her patients and building relationships with families. She brings a personalized approach to every child.

Dr. Pass and her husband, Steven, have three delightful children. Outside of work, Dr. Pass serves on the Board of Directors for the TeamConnor Childhood Cancer Foundation. She enjoys volunteering in the community, reading, and taking long walks with her dog.