

Children's Wisconsin programs focused on promoting nutrition, physical activity and healthy habits

Wisconsin Department of Health Services' data indicates that nearly 20% of Wisconsin children have obesity. Children's Wisconsin has several programs that promote nutrition, physical activity, health education and resources to ensure kids and their families are healthy and well.

Children's Wisconsin offers free e-learning resources for educators, parents and children on a variety of topics, including on nutrition and physical education. Children's Wisconsin's e-learning content provides fun and interactive lessons, activities and games to support students K-8 in learning how to establish healthy habits, increase physical activity and feel good about their bodies. In 2024, e-learning programs moved to a website-delivery model and have seen more than 12,000 website views on nutrition and physical activity lessons and activities since August 2024.

In 2023, Children's Wisconsin launched the Diabetes Prevention Clinic that works with patients and families to improve health and prevent type 2 diabetes in kids. The team focuses on lifestyle changes that help patients and their families live the happiest and healthiest life possible. Previously, patients with indications of pre-diabetes met with an endocrinologist, yet rarely saw a dietitian. Now, their first visit begins with a joint appointment with the endocrinology provider and dietitian, followed by alternating one-on-one check-ins. Dietitians work with patients and their families providing tailored tools and supports to improve their health, including providing education and strategies around meal habits and snacks, hydration, stress, exercise and more. Over the last two years caring for approximately 200 patients, none have gone on to develop type 2 diabetes. In addition, Children's Wisconsin clinicians offer trainings, support and resources to school personnel to support students with diabetes. This includes offering school plan worksheets, school management protocols, assistance with utilizing diabetes technology and how to help support and care for students with diabetes.

After 15 months of clinic attendance, one of Children's Wisconsin's patients reduced their weight by 7% and dropped their A1c from prediabetic to normal levels. Another patient was seen in clinic for 12 months. They previously had not participated in physical activity, and with Children's Wisconsin's physical therapy support, they built a healthy routine for physical activity four times per week. With dietitian support, they implemented a few dietary changes. Over the year, their weight decreased by 12%.

Children's Wisconsin recently implemented a pilot to integrate dietitians in the Greenfield Pediatrics primary care office. The pilot provides prevention and early intervention opportunities to address nutrition concerns, including healthy eating habits. Children's Wisconsin Clinical Nutrition utilize a family habits survey to quickly assess family habits around eating and activity. Dietitians are available for scheduled and same-day, preventive visits and provide age-appropriate resources. During 2024, the pilot had nearly 1,000 dietician visits as part of this integrated model, with initial analyses indicating families served saw a 15% average improvement in their family habits.

By offering comprehensive programs that meet kids and families where they are, Children's Wisconsin is supporting patients with the right care at the right time and the services they really need.