

C.S. Lewis & Co. Publicists

Dear Editor/Producer,

What should you do if your physician tells you your toddler or teen is overweight? How do you get school-aged kids to break their junk-food, couch potato habits, especially if you work forty or more hours a week and are not always home before and after school to monitor them?

RALLIE McALLISTER, MD, a family practice physician specializing in wellness and weight loss, says moms are the nutritional gatekeepers of their families. A busy mother of three, McAllister has written a new book called ***Healthy Lunchbox: The Working Mom's Guide to Keeping You and Your Kids Trim*** (LifeLine Press, September 2003). In it, she presents a practical and easy eating program with dozens of tips, action plans, and recipes to help everyone in the family lose weight without dieting. She offers sensible solutions for the most daunting nutritional challenges moms face, from snackers and picky eaters to video game fiends and fast food addicts.

McAllister is available for an interview and would be delighted to expand on any number of children's health, food, nutrition, and weight-loss topics, including:

- **The Working Mom's Dilemma:** Statistics and studies linking rise in maternal employment to childhood obesity; how healthy weight in kids is jeopardized by breastfeeding restrictions, day care/school food, being home alone, television commercials, and sedentary lifestyle
- **The Four Critical Hours:** What latchkey kids typically do and eat after school until dinnertime could shock you; ten creative ways to get your kids active and eating well during the four-hour danger zone before you get home from work
- **Eat Carbs, Lose Weight:** Seven reasons why consuming 50 percent of daily calories from carbohydrates will help you and your kids stay trim and healthy; recent medical findings singing the praises of carbs
- **Why Children Shouldn't Diet:** Medical evidence that restrictive eating in babies, toddlers, school-aged children, and teens is dangerous; how to help children of any age lose weight without dieting
- **Refrigerator/Pantry Makeover:** Learn to stock your kitchen with nutritious, delicious snacking foods; how to substitute unhealthy food, ingredients, and snack choices with healthier ones kids still love
- **Top Ten Fun Lunches:** McAllister solves the age-old problem of the hated brown bag lunch with quirky, kooky, original lunchbox riddles, games, themed meals, treasure hunts, and more, for brown baggers of all ages
- **Eight Ways to Get Kids Moving:** From TV allowances and job-boxes to finding offbeat after-school programs, this is a problem any mom can fix

McAllister is known to millions of viewers in the South as the host of the popular TV health magazine, *Rallie On Health*, and has a loyal following for her lively weekly syndicated column called "Your Health by Dr. Rallie McAllister."

Please let me know if I can arrange a time for you to speak with Dr. McAllister directly.

Sincerely,

Cathy Lewis

Moms' Role Key in Childhood Obesity

New Book for Working Moms Offers Sensible, Realistic Ways to Keep Their Families Fit and Healthy

One out of three American kids is overweight or obese. As a result, for the first time in a century, children's life expectancy is now shorter than that of their parents.

Of all the people in her children's world, *a mother has the most powerful influence on whether her kids will be healthy or overweight.* For today's busy working moms, 66 percent of whom typically clock in forty or more hours a week, meal planning, shopping, cooking, and modeling healthy habits are especially daunting responsibilities.

RALLIE McALLISTER, MD, a weight-loss specialist, family practice physician, and busy mother of three, meets these challenges head-on in her new book, ***Healthy Lunchbox: The Working Mom's Guide to Keeping You and Your Kids Trim*** (LifeLine Press, September 2003).

McAllister shows time-strapped moms unobtrusive, gradual, and creative changes they can make in their family's routines and diet to gain control over their kids' eating and exercise habits. She presents medically sound, mom-tested tips, action plans, recipes, and strategies to prevent obesity in children from infancy through adolescence and to help both moms and kids achieve a goal weight without dieting.

Readers learn about:

- The G-Factor Program, a practical eating plan that provides all essential nutrients, in the proper proportions, and helps kids and adults lose weight healthfully, effortlessly, and permanently
- Coping strategies for the four-hour danger zone (after school until dinnertime) when kids typically consume a third of their daily calories and are least active
- Imaginative ways to get kids eating well, especially when they are at school, day care, or home alone
- How to cope with a picky eater of any age
- Clever ordering tips for restaurants and fast-food joints
- Hundreds of recipes for kooky brown-bag lunches, snacks that disappear, fun breakfast entrees, and favorite dinners

Jam-packed with statistics and research findings, ***Healthy Lunchbox*** incorporates the latest medical wisdom on sound nutrition for children with McAllister's own long-time expertise as a physician and parent who knows firsthand what kids like and what working moms can realistically achieve.



Why are kids of working moms becoming overweight?

1. Moms have less time to plan, shop, and cook
2. Inability to breastfeed infants
3. Day care facilities offer less exercise, poor nutrition
4. Kids home alone
5. TV, video games, computers contributing to sedentary lifestyle
6. Kids' convenience foods offer high calories, low nutrition
7. Poor-quality school food
8. Junk-food and soda vending machines at school

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Facts Every Mother Should Know about Kids and Obesity

- For the first time in a century, American kids face a shorter life expectancy than their parents.
- One in every three kids in the U.S. has a weight problem.
- Eleven percent of American children and adolescents are obese.
- In the past three decades, the number of overweight children has more than doubled, with most of the increases occurring during the past ten years.
- Approximately a third of obese preschoolers and half of obese school-aged children will remain obese as adults.
- By adolescence, overweight kids have a 70 to 80 percent chance of carrying their extra weight into adulthood.
- Sodas are sold in at least 60 percent of all public and private middle schools and high schools nationwide.
- School kids who regularly consume soft drinks take in approximately 200 more calories each day than their classmates who abstain. A daily excess intake of 100 calories a day can easily lead to a 10-pound weight gain in just a year.
- In 1979, the typical American teen consumed 20.6 gallons of soda per year, but by 1994, the average teen was downing a whopping 64.5 gallons of soft drinks annually.
- Thirty-four percent of American kids ages two to five drink sodas regularly.
- The average American gets 27 percent of total daily energy from junk foods, and nearly a third of Americans consume half of their daily calories in the form of these non-nutritious foods.
- Nine out of ten products that food manufacturers hawk to children meet the criteria for “junk food.”
- Incredibly, only 1 percent of U.S. children and adolescents currently consume a diet that meets the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid.
- Nearly 60 percent of overweight kids between the ages of five and ten already have at least one risk factor for heart disease.
- Twenty percent of young Americans have high cholesterol levels, and boys as young as fifteen are developing clogged arteries.
- For each 250-calorie increase in a child’s daily diet, the risk of developing certain cancers rises by approximately 20 percent.
- One out of every four obese American child is showing early signs of Type II diabetes, a 50 percent rise in the last ten years.
- Approximately 30 percent of obese American children have been diagnosed with asthma, compared with 5 to 12 percent of the general population.



The term overweight refers to children who are 15% above their desirable weight, while the term obese describes kids who are at least 20% over their desirable weight.

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- Children with one obese parent have a 40 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese themselves.
- In families where both parents are obese, nearly 80 percent of children will develop the condition.
- Of mothers and fathers whose children met the criteria for obesity, 35 percent of those parents did not perceive their children as having a weight problem at all.
- Newborns who are breastfed for the first six months of life are 22 percent less likely to become obese throughout childhood than formula-fed babies.
- On a daily basis, the average American child spends four to five hours watching TV.
- Kids who rack up more than five hours of TV viewing a day are nearly five times more likely to become overweight as those who watch two hours or less a day.
- Only 11 percent of American kids watch two hours or less of TV a day.
- An estimated 40 percent of American kids have TVs in their bedroom, and nearly half have video games as well.
- Ninety percent of boys play video games more than four hours per week.
- Most kids spend twice as much time watching TV or playing video games as they do exercising.
- Skipping breakfast is strongly linked to the development of obesity, and a third of American kids and adults skip breakfast on a regular basis.
- Fewer than half of American students are currently enrolled in physical education classes.
- High school enrollment in PE classes dropped from 42 percent in 1991 to just 25 percent in 1995.
- Nearly half of U.S. youngsters between the ages of twelve and twenty-one are not regularly active.
- Children of active parents are six times more likely to be physically active than kids whose parents are couch potatoes.
- Only about 20 percent of American kids and adults manage to squeeze regular workouts into their daily lives.

During the teen years, kids gain the final 20 % of their adult height and the final 50 % of their adult weight. Despite their increasing nutritional needs, adolescent children are the least likely of all age groups to eat a well-balanced diet.

In one study in which kids were asked to do nothing more than to limit their television viewing to seven hours a week, virtually every child lost weight.

Suggested Interview Questions

About three quarters of American women are now employed. How has the trend toward working moms affected the health of our children?

At what age does the tendency toward becoming overweight or obese begin, and what can a mother do to prevent it?

What steps should a mother take if a physician says her child is overweight or obese?

What are the health risks, psychological and physical, related to childhood obesity?

What advice would you give to a mother who has an obese and willful teen with well-established eating habits and preferences?

What are some strategies for dealing with a picky eater?

What is the G-Factor Program, and what kind of results have you seen in those who have followed it?

Why have carbohydrates gotten such a bad rap in the media, and what kind of results have you seen with your high-carbohydrate eating plan?

Why is breakfast so important for children and adults who are watching their weight?

How can a mom get breakfast skippers to start eating breakfast?

Is snacking good or bad for weight loss?

Give examples of some really fun and original lunchbox ideas from your book that kids love.

What kinds of dinner recipes do you offer for working moms who do not have a lot of time to cook and shop?

How do you get couch potatoes to turn off the TV or video game?

What if a child is simply not interested in athletics? How do you get him or her to exercise?



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The Author and Expert

RALLIE McALLISTER, MD, the author of *Healthy Lunchbox: The Working Mom's Guide to Keeping You and Your Kids Trim* (LifeLine Press, September 2003), runs a preventive medicine practice that specializes in nutrition counseling and weight management called Performax—The Wellness Company, in Kingsport, Tennessee. In addition to her medical degree, Dr. McAllister has a Master of Science in Environmental Health and a Master's Degree in Public Health.

Dr. McAllister is the creator and popular host of *Rallie On Health*, a health magazine TV show with over 1 million viewers in the five-state area of eastern Tennessee.

She is also known to millions across the country for her weekly nationally syndicated column called "Your Health by Dr. Rallie McAllister." Beloved for her upbeat, down-to-earth style, Dr. McAllister says, "I like to forgo the medical mumbo-jumbo and use a language most folks already understand—plain English. I try to use humor when I can because laughter really is the best medicine."

Dr. McAllister lives with her husband and three children in Kingsport, Tennessee.



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