

Parents Take Ownership in Fighting Fat

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SOUTHFIELD, Mich. (WJBK) - Written for children as young as age six, it's called "Maggie Goes on a Diet." The book is about a 14-year-old girl whose weight loss journey takes her from being extremely overweight and insecure to a normal-sized girl who becomes the school soccer star.

Maggie's method of eating healthy foods and exercising is appropriate, but experts worry about the negative emphasis on Maggie's appearance.

"We want to look good. We want to look nice, but we don't want that to be the primary message that we're sending adolescents and children, especially young girls," said **Dr. Howard Belkin** with Beaumont Health System.

"The right way to approach a child who is overweight and taking on a healthier lifestyle is for the parents to take ownership. To speak with the pediatrician, to speak with one another and then have a healthy conversation with your child in a family context so that everyone knows that changes are being made in order for the health of the family and not necessarily related to the weight of one particular individual in the family," said registered dietician Christine Eagle.

Other ways parents can take ownership of this childhood obesity problem is watching what foods are being brought into the house. Don't buy foods or drinks that you don't want your children to have and be aware of high calorie restaurant foods. Limit eating out.

Eagle also suggests planning and preparing. That means when you go to a sporting event, for example, instead of going to the concession stand, make sure you have water and orange slices on hand for the whole family.