WIC Healthy Family Newsletter

Summer 2003

Turn off the TV and Tune into Family Fun!

Is your family getting an overdose of TV programs, videos, and computer games? If you're like most American families, you're spending too much time watching TV and not enough time having fun together as a family.

TV is one big reason that we're all less active. Kids in the U.S. are tipping the scales in record numbers and developing illnesses like diabetes earlier than ever before.

Watching TV slows down our brains and our bodies. We simply sit and watch, often with a soda in one hand and bag of chips in the other. Commercials aimed directly at our kids tempt them to gobble down burgers, fries, colas, and sugary cereals. And many young children play video games and watch programs that contain violence or adult themes.

So grab the remote and take a few simple steps to cut back:

- **Don't leave the TV on all the time** – Tune into shows you really want to watch and then turn the TV off.

- **Watch TV with your kids** – Choose educational programs that are age-appropriate. Talk to them about what they watch and build on things they learn. During commercials, get up and do a silly dance, or play a version of musical chairs, singing and dancing around the sofa until the commercial ends.

- **Budget your TV/computer time** – As a family, decide how much time you'll allow for TV, computer games, and video. Stick to your plan.

- **Make a list of other things to do** – Instead of TV, find a fun playground, go on a picnic, enjoy a family walk, play games, or spend time reading together.

> **Be a good role model! When it comes to fitness, you are your child's first and most important teacher.**

- **Keep TVs out of the bedrooms** – You'll have more control when there's no TV or computer in your child's room. And everyone will get more sleep by avoiding late-night talk shows!

- **Don't eat meals in front of the TV** – Instead, sit down at the table and eat meals together as a family. It's a time to connect with each other and enjoy the flavors of healthy foods. And that's something you'll never get from watching a TV show!