



How do we stop childhood obesity? Ask your kids, expert says

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Kids and teens often think they know what's best. So when it comes to preventing childhood obesity, maybe we should listen to them, says Baker Harrell, executive director of ACTIVE Life, a non-profit organization that seeks to combat obesity with social activism. Empowering kids to help families be healthier is more effective than lecturing our children on the importance of good nutrition, he says. Harrell and other experts recently spoke to [BeSmartBeWell.com](#) about the childhood obesity epidemic, its causes and solutions.

BSBW: How do we talk to today's kids—the so-called 'M generation'—about healthy choices?

Harrell: Young people in this generation seek out empowering experiences—experiences that allow their voice to be heard. For parents, what's important is not talking down or telling a child to do something and instead becoming a collaborative partner with that young person. Let their voice be heard and let their perspective be heard and let their fears and desires be heard.



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BSBW: How do we do that when it comes to food and nutrition?

Harrell: Look for opportunities to be active together as a family or to talk about food, and talk about healthy, nutritious food around the dinner table. But engage and then empower your children to become part of the family's conversation. Admit to your child, 'hey, I need your help, our family needs your help and we need your voice. We need you to play a lead role in helping our family live a healthy, active lifestyle.' That's not something a young person hears very often.

See video of Baker Harrell and many other experts, parents and kids, as well as a practical list of 10 [Habits to Have®](#) designed to help families tackle the childhood obesity epidemic at [BeSmartBeWell.com](#).

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