

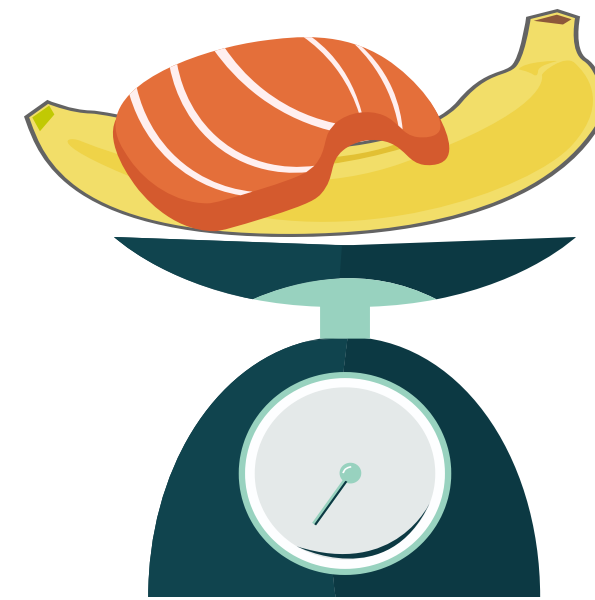
Factors that Promote Unwanted Weight Gain

Energy-Dense Foods

A calorie is a unit of energy. The amount of calories in a food refers to the amount of energy that it provides to the body when consumed. When more energy is consumed than used by the body, it is stored as fat, contributing to weight gain.

Calories in food are made up of 3 main **macronutrients** that provide energy:

- **Carbohydrates:** 1 gram = 4 calories
- **Protein:** 1 gram = 4 calories
- **Fat:** 1 gram = 9 calories



- An **'energy dense'** food is a food that provides a high amount of calories (energy) per gram. Energy-dense foods can contribute to unwanted weight gain because they provide a concentrated source of calories for a relatively small amount of food.
- A **'nutrient dense'** food is a food that provides a high amount of beneficial nutrients per gram. Nutrient-dense foods can be eaten at larger quantities for less calories than equal portions of energy-dense foods.

Some foods are high in calories but also high in beneficial nutrients, making them both **energy and nutrient dense**. When looking to maintain a healthy weight, it is best to try to eliminate or limit foods that are only energy-dense, as they tend to contribute to excess calorie intake, and offer little nutritional benefit.

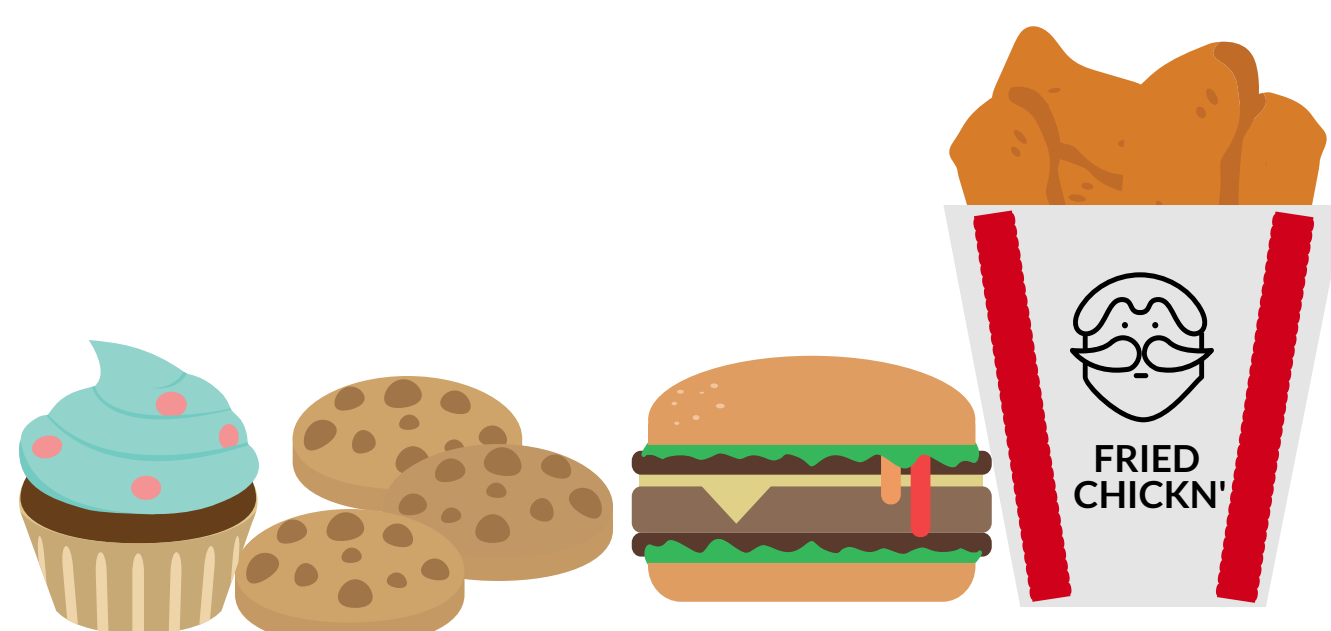
Nutrient- Dense Foods: (Incorporate Daily)

- Fruit and vegetables
- Leafy Greens
- Whole Grains
- Low-Fat Dairy
- Lean protein (poultry and fish)
- Eggs



Energy-Dense Foods: (Limit or Eliminate)

- Butter, lard, shortening, and heavy cream
- Sweets like candy, ice cream, and pastries
- Deep fried and fast food
- Frozen/microwaveable meals
- Sugar-sweetened beverages



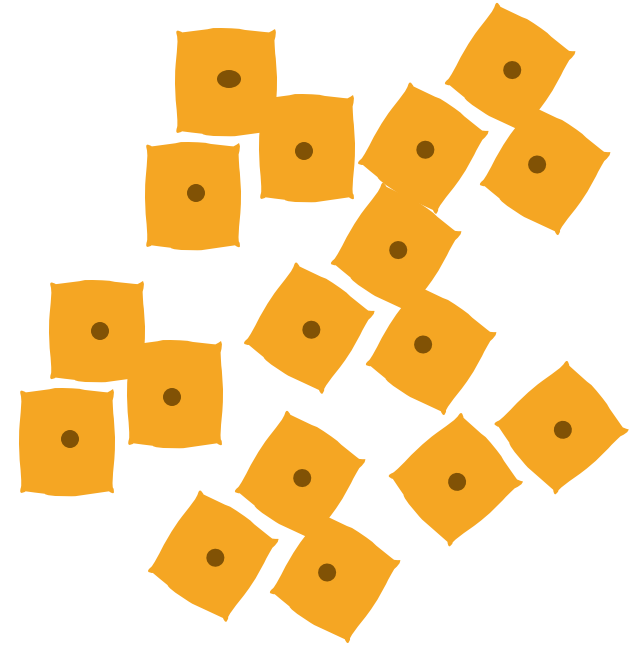
Nutrient and Energy Dense Foods: (Incorporate in mindful portions)

- Plant-based oils
- Whole-fat dairy (whole milk, cheese, full-fat yogurt)
- Nuts and nut butter
- Avocados
- Hummus



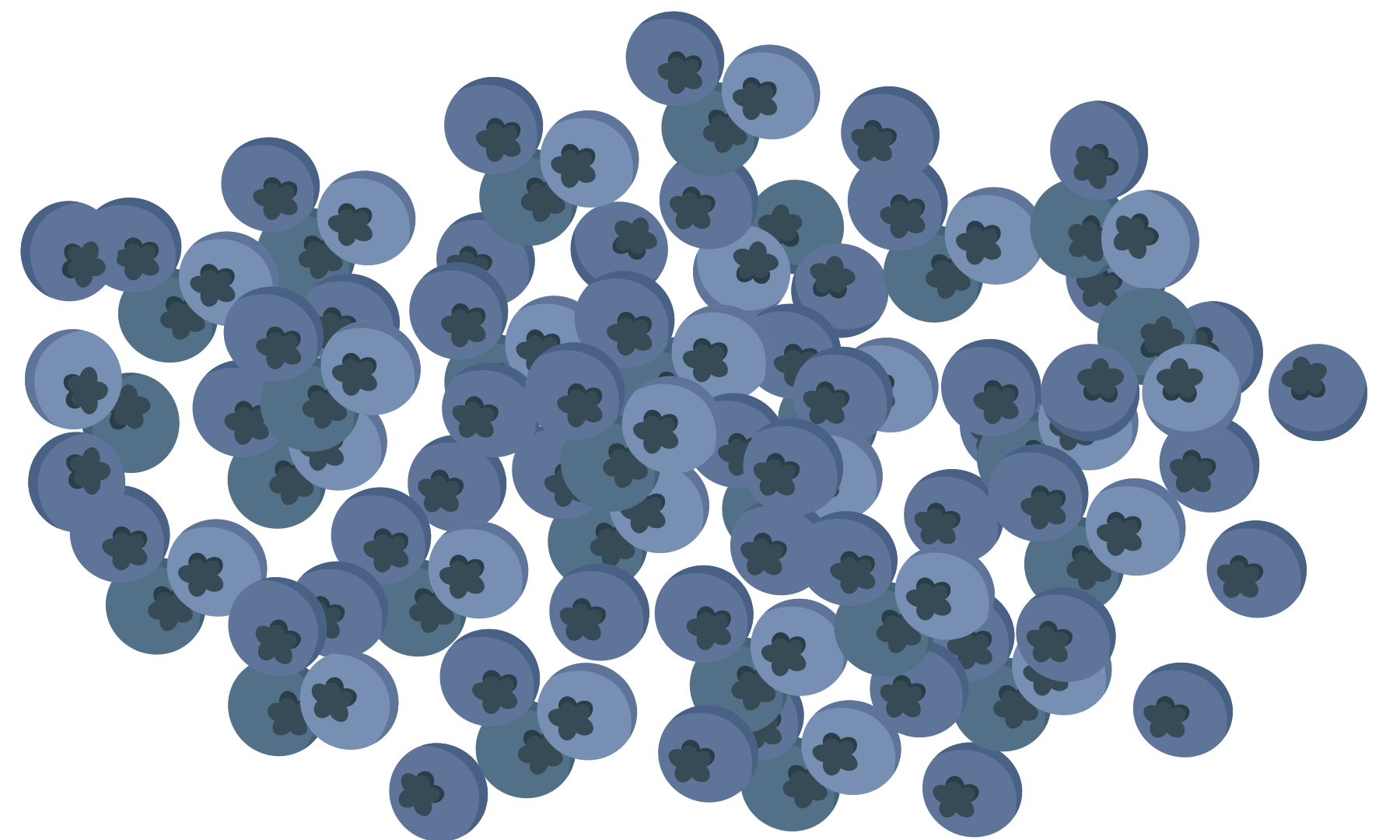
During instances of increased hunger, along with adding protein, bulking up the volume of meals and snacks with nutrient-dense foods is a great way to promote satiety while avoiding excessive intake of calories.

Eat More for Less!



100 calories of cheese crackers

VS

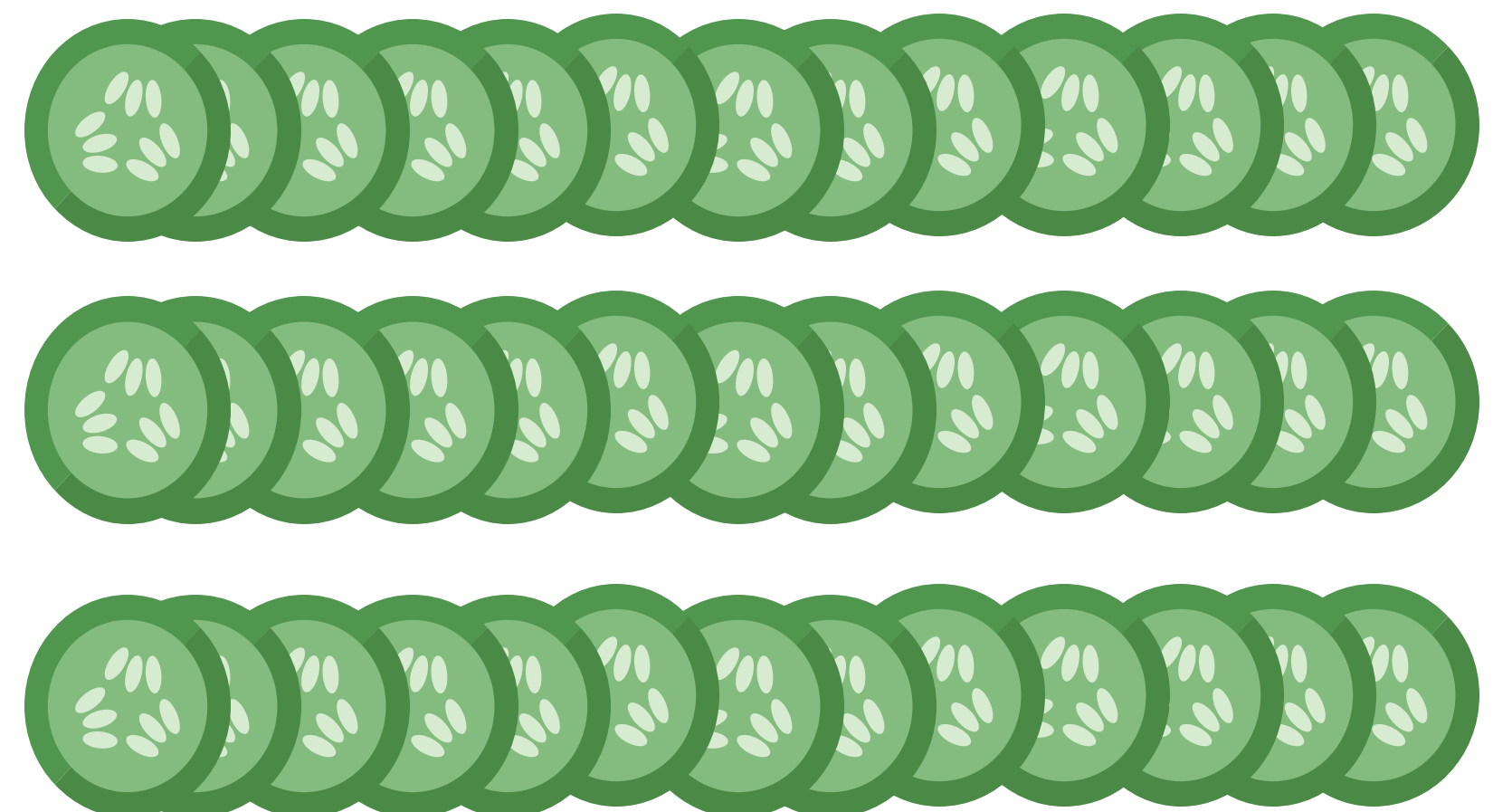


100 calories of blueberries

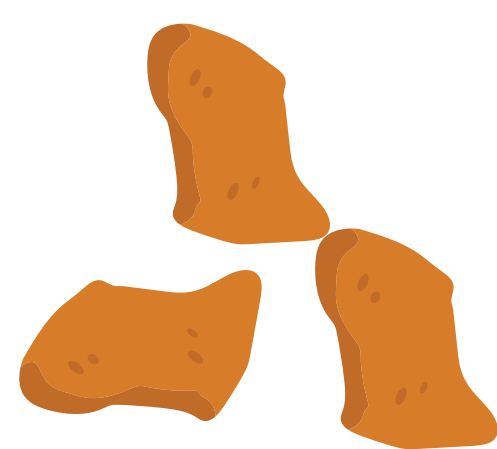


100 calories of chips

VS

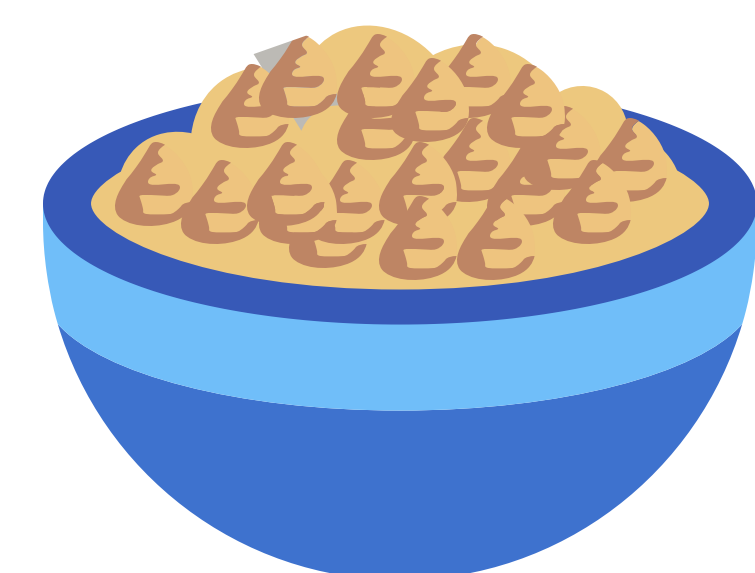


100 calories of cucumber slices

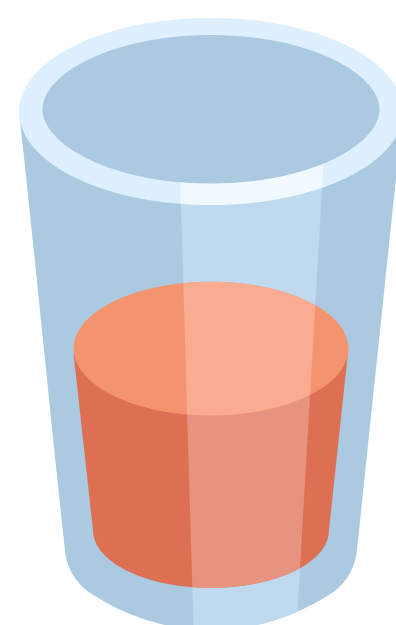


150 calories of fast food chicken nuggets

VS



150 calories of cooked quinoa



100 calories of fruit juice

VS



<10 calories of lemon water

Remember-

vs

The lower calorie option is not always the best option

Although incorporating lower-calorie, nutrient-dense foods is a good way to combat unwanted weight gain, focusing not only on the **quantity** of calories consumed but also the **quality** of calories consumed is often more beneficial for overall health.

For Example:

1 cup of Fruity-O's sweetened cereal

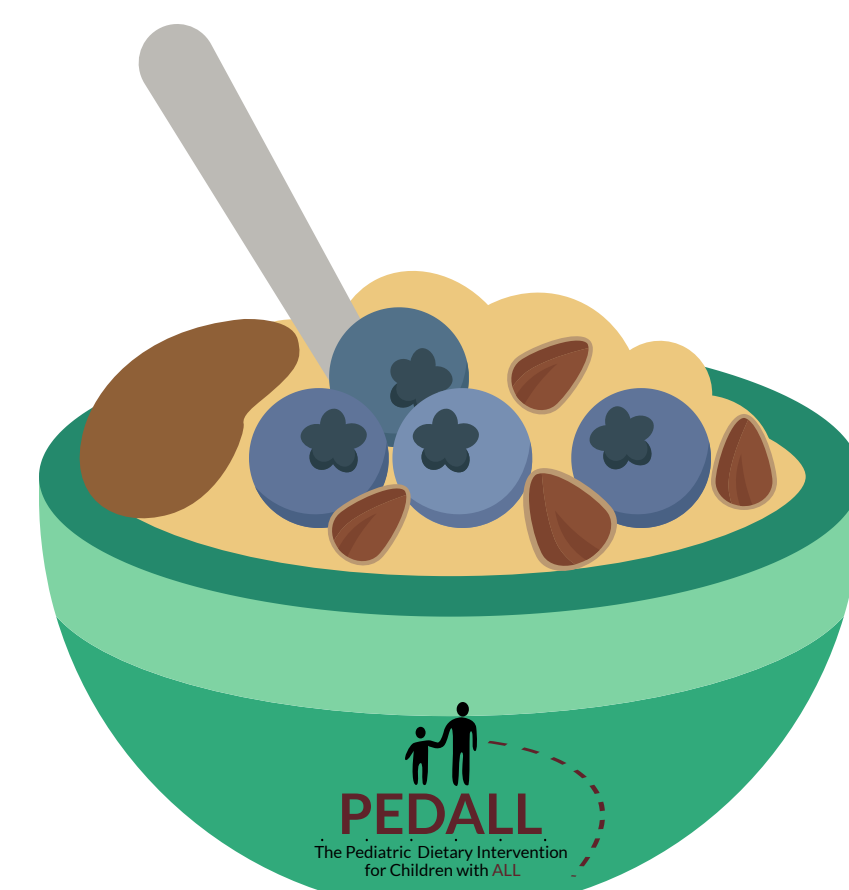


160 calories

- High proportion of calories coming from added sugar
- Causes a quick spike in blood sugar levels
- Hungry again soon after eating
- Energy crash mid-morning

vs

1 cup of oatmeal with berries, seeds, and nut butter



320 calories

- Calories coming from slowly digested carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fat
- Causes blood sugar levels to rise more gradually
- Fuller for longer after eating
- Sustained energy levels

Better Choice





Factors that Increase Risk for Unwanted Weight Gain: Excessive Screen Time



'Screen time' refers to any time that is spent using electronic devices like computers, tablets, video games, or television. Excessive screen time can promote unwanted weight gain by contributing to reduced physical activity as most time spent using electronics is done while remaining sedentary. Also, use of electronics during meal and snack time is commonly associated with "mindless eating" or eating past fullness.

Setting boundaries around screen time can help to ensure that use of electronics is not contributing to unwanted weight gain.

Ideas for setting screen time boundaries:

Ages 5-12

- Save use of tablets, phones, etc. for times when other activities are not feasible such as car rides or clinic visits.
- Establish 'screen-free' rooms in the house. Great areas to make 'screen-free' include bedrooms and the kitchen.
- Have designated 'screen-free' activities or times such as when eating meals and snacks or 1-2 hours before going to sleep.
- Model desired behaviors with your own use of electronics such as avoiding using phones while engaging in conversation, while eating, or while completing tasks that involve full attention.
- Use parental controls to block unwanted content and adjust your child's access to devices.
- Encourage other activities like playing outside, dancing, crafting, cooking, or playing with non-electronic toys.

Ages 13+

- Use phone or tablet settings to set time limits on most used apps like social media or entertainment (for example, after 45 minutes, TikTok closes for the rest of the day and cannot be opened until the following day).
- When participating in online classes or virtual school work, take scheduled breaks to stand up and stretch.
- Have designated 'screen-free' activities or times such as when eating meals and snacks or 1-2 hours before going to sleep.
- Use electronics to help you to meet our movement goals by playing music during physical activity, setting timer for stretching or movement sessions, or for viewing guided movement or exercise videos.