

# Notes from...

## AgriLIFE EXTENSION

### The Influences of Childhood Obesity

Over the past four decades, the rise in childhood obesity has significantly impacted many children, adolescents, and adults. The Centers for Disease Control states that 1 in every 5 children in the United States has obesity. Children with obesity are at a higher risk for developing chronic health conditions, such as asthma, joint and bone complications, sleep apnea, and type 2 diabetes. They are also at a higher risk for developing heart disease, due to potential high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Children with obesity are more likely to be obese as adults which increases the risk Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease, as well and many types of cancers.

There are many factors that have a major influence on obesity in children. Eating behaviors, lack of physical activity, metabolism and family genetics are the most individualized factors; however, home environment and social factors play a huge role. "One of the most influential risk factors of them all is screen time", says Elaine Montemayor-Gonzalez, a Health Specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. "Too much time

spent being inactive while watching television, scrolling social media or playing video games may also lead to lack of sleep for some children, which is also a risk factor for obesity", says Montemayor-Gonzalez. There is a cycle of events that all lead to the development of obesity. Over the years there has been a trend of inactivity and easy accessibility to inexpensive, high calorie foods and empty calorie beverages.

How can we help support the healthy growth and development that children need to become healthy adults? It is most important to be a healthy role model for your family, says Montemayor-Gonzalez. "Making health a priority and caring about the quality of the food that your family eats, and how much activity they get is really the first step" says Montemayor-Gonzalez. She continues, "Seek out help and resources so that you feel supported when making changes for yourself and your family". Try making some of the following changes and look at these helpful resources from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

- Physical Activity – School-aged youth are recommended to achieve a minimum of 60 minutes or more of physical



**Spirit Squad!** The Blackwell High School Spirit Squad attended camp at the University of North Texas in Denton July 30 through August 2. They won trophies in Rally Routine and Cheer. Spirit Squad members include (from left to right) Mascot Sophomore Chloe McKinney (Mooshie Award), Freshman Autumn Clark (All American), Sophomore Tori Campos, Senior Emilee Sanderson (UCA Staff Bid, Jump Off Finalist), Junior Caitlin Lange, Junior Allison Panzer (All American), Senior Jordan Jones (UCA Staff Bid, Jump Off Finalist, All American, Leadership Pin), and Manager Sophomore Cadi Powers.

activity throughout the day. Make a family activity calendar at home and motivate each other to be active together. Enjoy the outdoors and take a walk, ride bikes, build a garden, practice stretching, or play a basketball game in your driveway. Engage in a friendly competition with other families and see who can "Walk Across Texas" first. For more information on a free 8-week physical activity program, visit [walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/](http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu/)

- Healthy Nutrition- Always plan out your meals before grocery shopping to limit the temptations of unhealthy foods.

Choose more fruit and vegetables as snacks throughout the day and make them half of your plate for meals. Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration and limit sugary beverages. Invite your children to help you prepare and cook a meal, not only is this fun for them, but they are learning about healthy foods. To try some quick and healthy recipes, visit [dinnertonight.tamu.edu](http://dinnertonight.tamu.edu)

- Screen Time- Boundaries for screen time and social media should always be followed daily. A good balance will help limit inactivity. It is recommended that children 6

years and older should limit their screen time from 1- 2 hours a day. Set automatic limits on phones and tablets, and motivate your child to engage in youth development programs such as 4-H. To learn more about the hands-on activities in science, health, and agriculture, visit: [texas4-h.tamu.edu/](http://texas4-h.tamu.edu/)

As parents, grandparents, and guardians we must make positive changes for our children. We are the most important influencers in their lives. The positive change for a healthy lifestyle must come from us.

### Six Texas State Parks and Historic Sites Transfer to the Texas Historical Commission

Beginning September 1, the operation and maintenance of six Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) sites will be transferred to the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The 86th Texas Legislature approved House Bill 1422 which transfers operational control of these sites to the THC.

Sites transferring to THC include the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site

and Monument, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site, Fanchorp Inn State Historic Site, Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historic Site, Lipantitlan State Historic Site and Port Isabel Lighthouse State Historic Site.

"Our primary goal as stewards of these sites has always been the preservation of these iconic landmarks for the enjoyment of current and future Texans. We entrust the future care of these notable parks to the capable hands of the THC and know they will continue these high standards of maintenance and

operations going forward," said Carter Smith, Executive Director of TPWD. "TPWD is proud to have been the caretakers of these historic sites for many decades, and we will continue to care for the hundreds of historic buildings, archeological sites and other cultural resources that exist within state parks and natural areas across Texas."

These six sites are the newest additions to the 22 sites under the management of the THC.

"Texas Parks and Wildlife and their professional staff have done impressive work stewarding these historic places," said Mark Wolfe,

THC Executive Director. "We welcome this challenge to build on their legacy and continue the preservation of these unique sites for new generations of visitors to enjoy. We are pleased that we will be able to work with many of the same staff who have operated and maintained all the

transferring sites. We welcome them and these sites to the Texas Historical Commission family."

A list of all Texas State Parks can be found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website. For a list of Texas State Historic Sites operated by the THC, visit [www.StoriedSites.com](http://www.StoriedSites.com).

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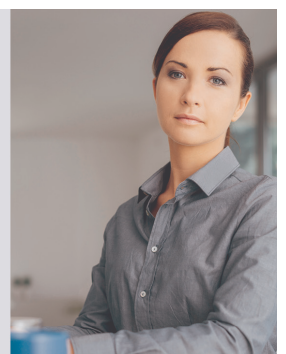
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