



# BSA SAFETY MOMENT

## COMBATING OBESITY

### SUMMARY

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 18 percent of children and teens in the United States are overweight or obese (BMI at or above the 85th percentile for children and teens of the same age and sex). There are serious health risks associated with obesity, as well as psychological risks. Schools, families, caregivers, and organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America must all do their part to combat this epidemic.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Factors that may contribute to this obesity epidemic include increased portion sizes; decreased physical activity; and increased consumption of high-calorie, low-nutrition foods.

Health risks associated with childhood obesity include Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, respiratory problems, and orthopedic problems. Psychological conditions such as depression and low self-esteem may also be greater in the overweight or obese child. There are many steps we can take as an organization to combat this epidemic:

- Encourage healthy food choices such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat milk and dairy products, and involve the Scouts in these choices.
- When traveling with Scouts, stop at restaurants that offer healthy meal options.
- Encourage Scouts to limit screen time (including TVs, computers, and electronic games) to no more than two hours per day, and emphasize the importance of getting enough sleep.
- Stress the importance of daily physical activity (60 minutes per day).
- Challenge your unit to earn the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Combatting Childhood Obesity”:  
[www.cdc.gov/features/PreventChildhoodObesity/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/features/PreventChildhoodObesity/index.html)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “About Child & Teen BMI”:  
[www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens\\_bmi/about\\_childrens\\_bmi.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_bmi/about_childrens_bmi.html)
- SCOUTStrong Healthy Living Initiative:  
[www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit/](http://www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit/)
- SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award:  
[www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit/healthy-unit](http://www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit/healthy-unit)
- Eatright.org, “How to Prevent Childhood Obesity: Healthy Eating Tips for Kids”:  
[www.eatright.org/resource/health/weight-loss/overweight-and-obesity/preventing-childhood-obesity-healthy-eating-tips-for-kids](http://www.eatright.org/resource/health/weight-loss/overweight-and-obesity/preventing-childhood-obesity-healthy-eating-tips-for-kids)