

Making tortillas without lard: Latino parents' perspectives on healthy eating, physical activity, and weight-management strategies for overweight Latino children.

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Making Tortillas without Lard: Latino Parents' Perspectives on Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Weight-Management Strategies for Overweight Latino Children

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Abstract

Latinos are among the most overweight racial/ethnic groups of US children. The study aim was to identify parents' perspectives on healthy eating, physical activity, and weight-management strategies for overweight Latino children. Four focus groups were conducted of Mexican immigrant, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and other Latino families with overweight children. Parents were asked 33 questions and sampled four healthy substitutes for traditional Latino foods, including multigrain enchiladas and brown rice. Nineteen parents were interviewed in the focus groups. The children's median

nine. Nineteen parents were interviewed in the focus groups. The children's median body mass index was 23; 60% had a body mass index \geq 95th percentile. Parents identified 22 themes regarding the most important things parents can do to help overweight children lose weight, including encouragement, not making the child feel left out, the whole family eating healthy, and the parent setting a good example. Parents identified 17 themes regarding the most important things overweight children can do to help themselves lose weight, including eating healthier, limiting portion size and second helpings, drinking more water, increased physical activity, decreased screen time, children educating themselves at school, asking parents for help, and participating in interventions that include the whole family. Challenges to getting kids to exercise included expense, time constraints, and neighborhood safety. Parents were open to integrating healthy substitutes into traditional Latino meals/snacks, and found them palatable. One mother stated, "We have to keep our traditional foods, but realize that we can make them more nutritious." Parents reported their children would accept high-fiber foods and low-fat dairy. In designing effective weight-management interventions for overweight Latino children, the study findings may prove useful in identifying healthy, well-accepted foods and beverages; agreeable physical activities; suitable targets for reducing inactivity; and efficacious strategies for enhancing traditional foods and meals so that there is an increased likelihood of healthy diet and weight loss. Parental input on the most important things that children and parents can do to help children lose weight and on challenges faced in trying to get children to exercise might provide valuable guidance in devising effective, evidence-based interventions that are likely to be adhered to.



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