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Meal Preparation Resources for Picky Eaters and Children with Type 2 Diabetes

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Dr. Elizabeth Parker, MD and Parker Place: A Children's Health and Wellness Center

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Introduction

- One of the challenges that children with diabetes mellitus (DM) face is that their lifestyle patterns often imitate those of their parents/caregivers. Therefore, if their caregivers are making unhealthy lifestyle choices, then they may be more likely to do so.
- In some families – especially low-income families – it is not practical to cook healthy meals every day. Families may be more likely to purchase fast foods because it is cheaper and convenient.
- This begs the question – how can DM be appropriately addressed in children and adolescents of low-income families?

Site Description

- Parker Place is an outpatient children's health and wellness center located in Annapolis, Maryland.
- Dr. Elizabeth Parker, is a board-certified pediatric endocrinologist who started this practice to branch away from the traditional medical model and focus on a more holistic, well-rounded practice to encourage healthy lifestyles for children and their families.
- Services provided (children from ages 0-21):
 - Pediatric endocrinology
 - Lifestyle medicine
 - Developmental pediatrics
 - Speech therapy & social skills

Summary of Needs Assessment

Identified needs of the site:

- A resource to help children and families make better choices while eating at fast food restaurants.
- A resource with simple healthy meals and snacks children can make on their own or with minimal caregiver assistance to promote independence with meal preparation and sequencing skills.
- A resource explaining food chaining to help children that are picky eaters expand their diets and try new foods.



Literature Review Summary

More than 80 percent of all children and adolescents with type 2 diabetes are overweight, and about 40 percent are clinically obese (Healthday, 2022).

- There is an overall annual percentage chance (APC) of 4.8% per year in children/adolescents younger than 20 being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (CDC, 2022).
- While there is no cure, strategies for managing symptoms include losing weight, maintaining a healthy diet, and exercising (CDC, 2022).
- Research supports that lower household income is consistently associated with a poorer diet, and these households tend to purchase foods of lower nutritional quality compared to higher income households (French et al., 2019).

Having a child that is a picky eater not only impacts the child, but it also impacts the family's meal choices. Picky eaters may promote meal-related parent stress (Trofholz et al., 2017).

- Causes of picky eating may include early difficulties feeding, late introduction of lumpy foods, pressure to eat and behavioral factors (Taylor & Emmett, 2018).
- The consequences of picky eating may include poor dietary variety and the inability to meet nutritional needs (Taylor & Emmett, 2018).

Capstone Project Description



Cover page for fast-food e-book.

Digital Book:

- Educate diabetic patients and their families/caregivers on food groups, portion sizes, counting calories, healthy snacks/food choices, nutritional information in food options and suggestions on how to reduce calories in fast-food meals.
- Educate patients and their families/caregivers on how to make healthy eating decisions to avoid possible complications from diabetes later in life.
- Multiple pages include an interactive nutrition calculator where patients and their parents/caregiver can select the meal they intend to order, and the calculator displays all nutritional value for the meal.



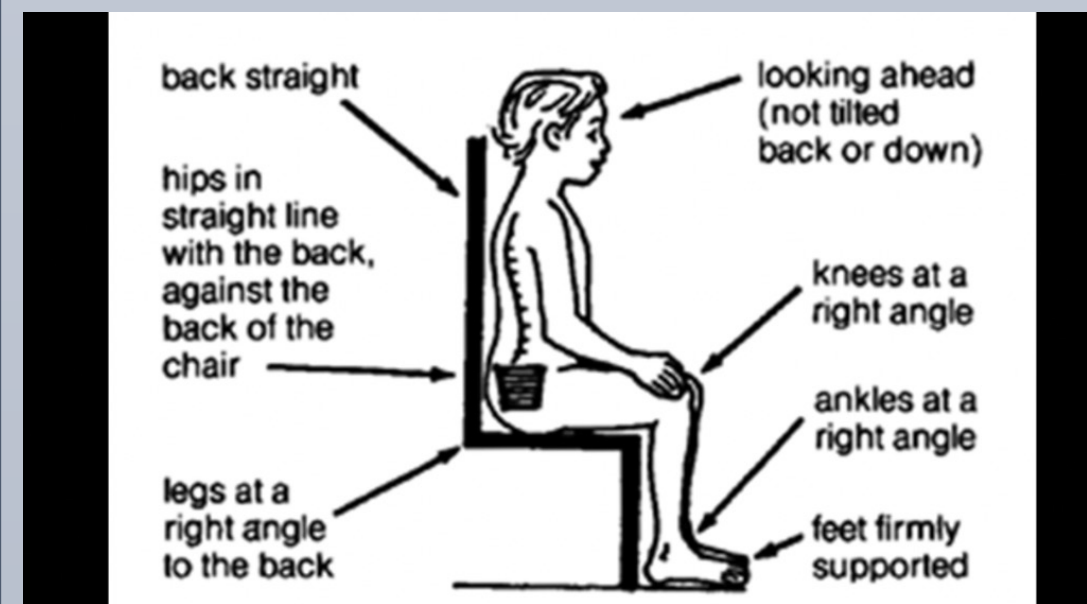
Dinner meal preparation guide with nutritional information.

Meal Guides:

- Reduce parent/caregiver burden during meal preparation.
- Promote sequencing and motor skills necessary to complete meal preparation tasks.
- Promote and encourage critical thinking skills so children/adolescents can make healthy choices on their own.

Creating A Positive Mealtime Experience Videos:

- Educate parents/caregivers of picky eaters on how to introduce their child to foods of various textures, smells, and tastes.
- Improve children's interactions with foods.
- Educate parents/caregivers on proper posture while sitting at the table and using positive language to encourage children to try new foods.



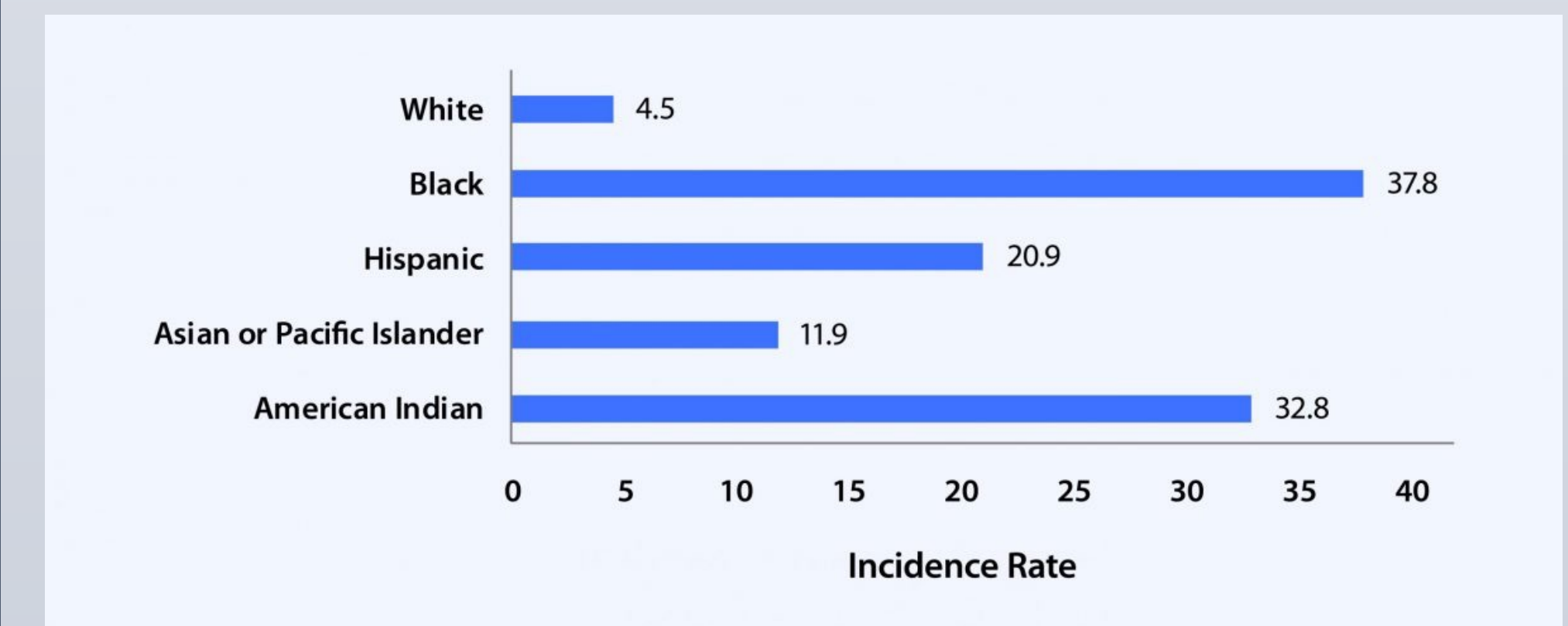
Screenshot from video showing Proper sitting posture while eating.

Learning Objectives Achieved

1. Create a 44-page e-book highlighting all 600-calorie or less food options for 23 of the most popular fast-food establishments, as well as including tips for each restaurant to reduce calorie intake.
2. Design 12 portion-controlled meal preparation guides for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks that can be completed in 30 minutes or less to help children/adolescents participate in meal preparation and alleviate caregiver burden.
3. Demonstrate advance knowledge and skills to create video resources for children that are picky eaters and their caregivers to help introduce new foods.

Implications For OT Practice

- Usage of e-book may help children and families to make healthier informed choices when eating out and help children lose weight.
- Implementation of meal preparation guides can encourage children to be more active in the kitchen with caregivers and spark an interest in trying new foods.
- Parent/caregiver education on food chaining to promote trying new foods can advance parent/caregiver knowledge on the topic of picky eating and ways to get their child to be willing to try new foods.



Incidence of Type 2 Diabetes per 100,000 Persons Among Children and Adolescents Aged 10-19 Years, by Racial or Ethnic Group, United States (CDC, 2022).

References & Acknowledgements

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