

Turn High-Risk Situations into Personal Wins

PARENTS ASK:

What are high-risk situations?

A high-risk situation can be anything that makes it hard for you or your child to eat healthy or do GREEN activity.

Fast-food restaurants are risky for most people. So are celebrations based on food. Bad weather can make it hard to do GREEN activity. Tests, papers, and extra pressure at school are high-risk situations for many children. So is an argument with a friend, being with a friend who just wants to watch television, or being left out of plans friends have made. Changes in the daily schedule may also put you at risk.



Situations like these can put you and your child at risk for overeating. They can put you at risk for not getting physical activity. They can make it hard to manage weight. They can make it hard to stay healthy.

PARENTS ASK:

What can I do to turn a high-risk situation into a personal win for my child or me?

Plan it carefully—in advance and in detail. Whether it's a

Try listing some of the high-risk situations you and your child face most often. These are situations you will want to plan in advance for.

PARENTS ASK:

How can a high-risk situation be a positive?

It can if you learn to manage it. It can if you plan in advance. Learning to meet a challenge builds confidence. It helps build skills to do it again and again. So, each time you or your child come through a high-risk challenge, you improve your skills. You gain confidence. You feel better about yourself. That's how a high-risk challenge can become a personal win.

KEY GOALS

Dealing with high-risk situations will help your child meet 4 key goals:

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold Family Meetings
- ⊙ Keep Track of Weight

situation you face or your child faces, you approach it the same way.

- ▶ Use your experience when you plan ahead. Use your imagination. What are your goals for the high-risk situations? Write them down. What might get in the way? What could go wrong? Write it down.
- ▶ Then use your problem-solving skills with each possible barrier. Remember the 6 steps? Identify the specific barriers. Brainstorm possible solutions. Compare solutions. Develop a plan.

Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- ▶ Identifying situations that are high-risk for your child
- ▶ How to plan in advance and in detail for them
- ▶ Using mistakes to improve your next plan



You and your child can learn how to handle high-risk situations. You've just got to prepare and keep trying. The key, of course, is to make sure you learn to succeed.

Try the plan. And evaluate how the plan worked.

Say your child has a tough week at school coming up. Maybe a big paper and some tests to prepare for. How could she handle it and still meet her GREEN activity goal? She could give up. She could say to herself, "It's impossible to meet

When a barrier blocks your route, problem-solving helps you be flexible. It helps you find another way to reach your goal.

If you are going to join friends at a fast-food restaurant, exactly what will you eat? Will you have a salad or a grilled chicken sandwich without the mayo? Or will you just have a diet soda? What will you say when a friend tells you to have a cheeseburger? Will you be too embarrassed to say, "No"? Will you feel like you are not part of the group if you say, "No"? How will you deal with your feelings?

If you are planning to get physical activity, plan to pack all your workout clothes, your shoes, and even your socks. Do you need a water bottle? How are you getting there? What time will you start? Will you ask anyone to join you? Who?

my GREEN activity goal. I can't do 30 minutes of GREEN activity a day and still do what I need for school."

Or she could take another approach. She could plan to take a break every hour. She could walk around the block. Maybe for only 10 minutes. But it will give her some exercise. It will help her focus better when she gets back to work. She could also do extra physical activity on the weekend. Even if she can't get 30 minutes of physical activity every day of the week, she can average 30 minutes a day over the week. That's a way to meet her overall goal of getting 200 minutes a week.

► Plan the details. Thinking about the details makes it more likely that the plan will work. Picture you or your child putting it into action. The more barriers you see in advance, the better. The more details

you plan for in advance, the more likely you are to feel confident. And the more likely you will handle the challenges you will meet.

► Check up on your child. Offer support. Offer advice.

PARENTS ASK:

What should I do when I fail at a high-risk situation? What should I do if my child fails? That's no way to feel like a winner.

No, but it can be. It all depends on how you handle the "failure." The most important thing is not to look at learning to handle high-risk situations as a black-and-white, success-or-failure type of thing. It isn't. Learning to handle high-risk situations is a *process*. It's like learning to ride a bike, shoot baskets, or hit a ball. It's a *process* that takes some time and continued effort.

Take a high-risk situation you or your child have faced. Ask yourself about what went right. The things that go right are your small wins. You can repeat those small wins the next time you face a similar situation. Ask what went wrong. Be as specific as you can. Probably not

Tyrone was upset with himself. He had eaten a lot of RED food snacks at a party. He'd thought about it in advance. He had even made a plan so that it would not happen. But it did anyway. That's what made him feel so discouraged.

He talked to his parents at a family meeting. His father pointed out some things that worked. Tyrone had asked the host to have healthy foods to eat, and she did. "That part of your plan worked," he said. "And you snacked on fruits and vegetables at the party just as you had planned. That part also worked. These are your small wins. You can build on them. Let's try to figure out exactly what went wrong."

Tyrone said, "Instead of going outside to be physically active, I got caught up in a conversation with Jose near the RED foods."

"And that's where your plan broke down. It was just too hard to stand next to the RED foods and not snack on them," his father said. "It's good news that you didn't eat as many of them as you would have before. Eating the GREEN foods first helped."

"What kept you from moving away from the RED foods?" his father asked.

Tyrone said that he had felt like saying, "Let's get away from all these chips. I don't want to eat too much. Let's go outside and talk or do something active." But, Tyrone told his dad, "I just didn't feel comfortable saying that to Jose."

"Feeling uncomfortable like that was the barrier to success," his father said. "How could you deal with this problem in the future?" he asked.

They brainstormed about what to do. They came up with 4 things Tyrone could do differently next time. He could tell some of his friends before going to the party that he wanted to stay away from RED foods. He could ask them to help him. He could ask his good friend Sam to rescue him if he sees him trapped by the RED foods. And he could practice some things to say. That would help him feel more comfortable speaking up for himself.

Tyrone felt much better. He thanked his parents. "I hope there's a party soon. I'd like to try again. I think I could really succeed with this new plan," he said.

"Great. I'll bet you can," his father said. "I'll practice with you. That way you'll know exactly how to talk to your friends."

How did his father help Tyrone deal with a high-risk situation?

Have you ever had to help your child deal with a situation like this? What did you suggest?

The more details and barriers you can plan for in advance, the more likely you are to feel confident handling new challenges.

everything did. What barriers did you meet that you didn't expect? These are things you can problem-solve about so you can build on your small wins.

By learning from mistakes, you can come away a winner. Facing high-risk situations is a learning process, not a one-time test. Adding up small wins can

make you a big winner in the end.

Sometimes people get down on themselves when they make a mistake. They fall into negative thinking. They blame themselves. That's not helpful. It's also not fair to yourself. One slip-up isn't the end of the world. In the long run, it's

the buildup of your small wins that counts. It's the pattern of your lifestyle choices that really matters.

So, if you must blame something, blame the plan, not you or your child. Next time

Holidays and Parties

You've already looked at some high-risk situations. You learned to deal with parties and holidays by planning ahead. Remember some of the tips in Chapter 14?

- ▶ Plan ahead how many RED foods you will eat.
- ▶ Eat a healthy snack before going to a party.
- ▶ Take healthy foods with you to a party.
- ▶ Ask the host in advance to serve healthy foods.
- ▶ Focus on an activity instead of food.
- ▶ Don't stand by the RED foods.
- ▶ Fill up on healthy foods instead of RED foods.

How to help yourself deal with high-risk situations

- ▶ Identify 2 high-risk situations you face.
- ▶ Plan in advance and in detail for them.
- ▶ Keep track of results.
- ▶ Identify your small wins.
- ▶ Use any mistakes to improve your next plan.

you will just make a better plan. That's how to bring success out of what seems like failure. That's how to help your child feel more confident about handling other high-risk challenges.

PARENTS ASK:

How can I help my child learn to deal with high-risk situations so that he can meet his goals?

- ▶ Help your child identify some high-risk situations he faces. When is healthy eating at risk? When is getting enough physical activity at risk?

- ▶ Work with your child to use problem-solving skills to make plans that will help turn these challenges into personal wins. This will improve your child's skills, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Try to make plans for at least 2 situations.
- ▶ Help your child identify small wins as often as you can.

How to help your child deal with high-risk situations

- ▶ Identify 2 high-risk situations for your child, one for healthy eating, and one for GREEN activity.
- ▶ Plan in advance and in detail for them.
- ▶ Talk about how the plans worked.
- ▶ Identify small wins at family meetings.
- ▶ Use any mistakes to improve the next plan.

Learning to handle high-risk situations is a *process*. It's like learning to ride a bike, shoot baskets, or hit a ball. It takes some time and continued effort.

Turn High-Risk Situations into Personal Wins

Identify Situations That Are High-Risk for You and Your Child

In the first column, put a check mark (✓) next to the situations that are high-risk for you. Put 2 check marks (✓✓) for situations that are very high-risk.

In the second column, put a check mark (✓) next to the situations that you think are high-risk for your child. Put 2 check marks (✓✓) for the situations that you think are very high-risk for your child.

Write down any other situations that are high-risk for you or your child in the blank spaces at the end of the chart. Check them off with 1 or 2 check marks also.

In the last column, write down the reason each situation puts you or your child's health at risk.

High-risk for me?	High-risk for my child?	Situation:	What makes it risky?
		Bad weather	
		Being at a friend's house	
		Being home alone	
		Celebrations/Parties	
		Eating too fast	
		Family meals	
		Fast-food restaurants	
		Feeling upset	
		Food in my kitchen	
		Hanging out with friends	
		Holidays/Vacations	
		Pressure at school	
		Restaurants	
		Schedule changes	
		Snacks	
		Stress at work	
		Stress in the family	
		Stress with friends	

Identify Situations That Are High-Risk for You and Your Child (continued)

High-risk for me?	High-risk for my child?	Situation:	What makes it risky?
		Traveling	
		Visiting relatives	
		Watching television	
		Weekends	
		Working after school	

Talk to your child about his own High-risk Help Sheet. What situations does he think are risky or very risky? Are there any situations you think are high-risk for your child that he did not check off? If so, ask him about them.

Turn Your Own High-Risk Situations Around

In the following tables, write down several high-risk situations from the chart above. Use situations that have 2 check marks next to them. Then, brainstorm. List all the possible ways you could deal with these high-risk situations.

Put a ✓ by all the strategies that would be helpful. Put an X by the ones that are realistic. These are strategies that you are really able to do. Then, write down your plan of action.

High-risk Situation:		
Possible ways to deal with situation:	Helpful	Realistic
My plan of action:		

After trying out your plan, answer these questions:

How did my plan work? _____

What were the small wins? _____

What were the barriers? _____

What did I learn? _____

Turn Your Own High-Risk Situations Around (continued)

High-risk Situation:		
Possible ways to deal with situation:	Helpful	Realistic
My plan of action:		

After trying out your plan, answer these questions:

How did my plan work?

What were the small wins?

What were the barriers?

What did I learn?

High-risk Situation:		
Possible ways to deal with situation:	Helpful	Realistic
My plan of action:		

After trying out your plan, answer these questions:

How did my plan work?

What were the small wins?

What were the barriers?

What did I learn?

Turn High-Risk Situations into Personal Wins

Pin down high-risk challenges.

- ▶ What situations can put you or your child at risk for overeating?
- ▶ What situations make it hard to get GREEN activity?



Celebrate your wins.

Each time you or your child come through a high-risk challenge, you:

- ▶ Improve your skills.
- ▶ Gain confidence.
- ▶ Build your self-esteem.
- ▶ Have a personal win.

What to do when your child fails at a high-risk situation

- ▶ Don't look at it as a black-and-white, success-or-failure type of thing. It isn't. It's a *learning process*. It takes time and effort.
- ▶ Blame the plan if you must blame something. Then improve it.
- ▶ Use mistakes to improve your next plan. Ask yourself:
 - ▶ What went right? Build on these small wins next time your child faces a similar situation.
 - ▶ What went wrong? Plan for these barriers next time.

Plan for success—in advance and in detail.

Go over these tips with your child. Be sure to use them when you make a plan.

- ▶ Use your experience to plan ahead. What are your goals? Write them down.
- ▶ Use your imagination. What things could go wrong? Write them down.
- ▶ Use your problem-solving skills with each possible barrier.
 - ▶ Identify specific barriers.
 - ▶ Brainstorm possible solutions.
 - ▶ Compare solutions.
 - ▶ Develop a plan.
 - ▶ Put the plan to work.
 - ▶ Evaluate how the plan worked.
- ▶ The more details you see in advance, the better.
- ▶ The more barriers you plan for, the more likely you are to build upon your small wins and succeed.
- ▶ Picture yourself putting your plan into action. Picture yourself being successful.