# Michelle Obama to Focus on Home-Cooked Meals

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First lady Michelle Obama speaks at the Building a Healthier Future Summit in Washington, Friday, March 14, 2014. The event brings together leaders from the private, nonprofit, government and academic sectors to address the childhood obesity epidemic. **(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Next up for "Let's Move [1]"? How about "Let's Cook."

Michelle Obama [2] said Friday that a new focus of her anti-childhood obesity effort will be to help people cook more of their meals at home because they're healthier.

Addressing a health summit in Washington, the first lady said home-cooked meals have less fat, sodium, cholesterol and calories than meals prepared in restaurants — and save money, too.

She said too many people think they don't have the time or the skills to cook for themselves, but that plenty of meals can be pulled together in less than 30 minutes for cheaper than takeout.

Mrs. Obama began focusing on the nation's childhood obesity problem as soon as she got to the White House in 2009. She pledged Friday to stick with the issue long

after she's gone.

"We cannot walk away from this issue until obesity rates drop for children of every age and every background," she said. "We cannot walk away until every child in this country has a shot at a healthy life. And that's why I'm in this thing for the long haul, and I mean long after I leave the White House, because I believe in finishing what I start."

Mrs. Obama praised recent federal statistics showing a sharp decline in obesity rates among children ages 2 to 5 as a small, though important, achievement, but still not enough evidence to declare the problem solved. She urged everyone to keep working on solutions, especially among older kids.

"Now is not the time to take our foot off the gas and congratulate ourselves on a job well done," Mrs. Obama said. "Just the opposite. Now is the time to fight even harder, because we now know it is possible to make a difference on this issue. We know that our strategies are beginning to work."

Her strategy largely has been to cajole food and beverage makers, retailers, restaurants and others to make healthier products. Federal legislation and regulations are leading to changes in school breakfast and lunch programs, and are expected to bring an updated "Nutrition Facts" label to thousands of packaged products before the end of the decade.

The promised focus on helping families adopt healthier habits by doing more cooking at home fits that approach.

In her remarks, the first lady talked about working with supermarkets to distribute recipes and offer cooking demonstrations, with schools to develop the "home economics class of the future" to give students basic cooking skills and with chefs to get them to offer affordable cooking classes in their restaurants.

She promised announcements of new initiatives in the coming months.

Mrs. Obama said research shows that eating meals cooked at home is one of the best ways families can improve their health.

Growing up, she said her mother kept a strict food budget, planned her meals weekly and shopped for groceries every Saturday.

"The question is 'How do we help families start cooking again, even if it's just one or two meals a week?'" she told the audience of public health professionals, nutritionists, corporate leaders and others in the closing address at the conference organized by the Partnership for a Healthier America.

Mrs. Obama is honorary chairwoman of the nonprofit organization, which was created in conjunction with "Let's Move," her initiative against childhood obesity. The partnership works to support the goals of "Let's Move" and with businesses to bring then on board and hold them accountable for the commitments they make to

improve the health of Americans.

It so far has more than 70 commitments from companies of all sizes, said Larry Soler, its CEO.

Among them was yogurt maker Dannon, which announced Friday that it will begin reducing the amount of sugar and fat in all its brands.

**Also read:** Subway Joins Michelle Obama's 'Lets Move' Campaign **[3]**

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