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**Kurbo Media FAQ**

*Updated 11.11.16*

**What is Kurbo?**

Kurbo is the first mobile platform to help kids, teenagers and families eat healthier and lose weight using their favorite tool – the smartphone. Based on Stanford University’s renowned and research-based [Pediatric Weight Control Program](#), Kurbo is the only system combining personalized coaching and expert advice with mobile apps for food and activity tracking to promote healthier eating and exercise habits for children and their families. Unlike other exclusively adult-oriented tools that focus on calorie-counting, which can be dangerous and too complicated for children, Kurbo is a comprehensive, evidence-backed program designed to empower and encourage the whole family to make healthier lifestyle choices.

Co-founded by Thea Runyan and Joanna Strober, the coauthor of “Getting to 50/50,” a best-selling book about dual-career parenting, and a former private equity banker, Kurbo was part of the Rock Health incubator for health technology startups. In late July 2014, the company announced the close of a \$5.8M Series A funding round led by top tier investors including Signia Venture Partners, Bessemer Venture Partners, Promus Ventures and Data Collective. The company is located in Palo Alto.

Here is a quick video overview of the program: <https://youtu.be/8UOhoweQPcM>.

**How does Kurbo work?**

The Kurbo program has three parts: (1) the mobile app, which contains a food and fitness tracker, games, progress screens and “Krunch” challenges; (2) virtual feedback and suggestions based on the foods and exercise tracked; and (3) live, human expert coaching delivered via phones, video and text to give participants feedback, encouragement and recommendations.

With Kurbo, the whole family will learn to increase intake of healthy foods while decreasing unhealthy ones. The program utilizes a traffic light food system which categorizes high calorie, sugar and carbohydrate-rich foods as “reds,” and most vegetables and fruits as “greens,” and neutral. Because cutting back calories in growing children in order to drop pounds is not a good idea unless advised by your child's doctor, Kurbo's tracker focuses on health, balance, and portion control, along with

increased exercise. Kurbo helps kids reach and maintain a healthy weight by changing their lifestyle and food choices, not by restricting their calories.

## **How is Kurbo different from other online weight loss programs and apps already out there?**

While there are many other weight loss and fitness apps and programs on the market today, none of them specifically addresses the needs of kids and teens. For example, most of the popular fitness apps and programs require users to be 18 years or older, and most are based on calorie-counting, which is widely considered both dangerous and ineffective for children.

Kurbo is the only system that is safe for kids and teenagers, as well as effective for adults. The program which was adapted from 30 years of pediatric obesity research by top universities such as SUNY and Stanford, is based on healthier eating and portion control with a balanced diet of nutrient-rich foods, which results in weight loss. The program was designed specifically for kids, incorporating the simple concept of red/yellow/green foods along with games and challenges to make it both easy and fun to follow. But adults also enjoy its simplicity and effectiveness. About 90% of people who complete the initial 12 week program lose weight and lower BMI.

Kurbo is also the only system to incorporate direct, interactive communications – we look at what you tracked and provide personalized feedback and alternate suggestions. Finally, Kurbo is the first and only mobile weight loss program designed for families to use together.

For a more detailed look at how Kurbo compares to other weight loss programs out there, have a look at a few of the following articles published on the Kurbo blog:

- o Kurbo vs. Weight Watchers: (for kids): <https://www.kurbo.com/blog/weight-watchers-kids-pioneering-solution-child-weight-loss/>
- o Kurbo vs. Weight Watchers: (for teens): <https://www.kurbo.com/blog/weight-watchers-teen-girls/>
- o Kurbo vs. Jenny Craig: <https://www.kurbo.com/blog/jenny-craig-for-kids/>
- o Kurbo vs Myfitnesspal: <https://www.kurbo.com/blog/myfitness-pal-kids/>

## **Which Platforms does Kurbo operate on?**

Kurbo is available for iOS (8.0 or higher) and for Android (4.0 or newer)

## **How much does Kurbo cost?**

The program is subscription-based and offers a variety of pricing plan options for coaching plans including \$85/month, \$210 for three months and \$300 for six months.

The app can be used free by parents and other members of the program participant's family, or by individuals who want to try to manage on their own without a coach..

## **What evidence do you have that Kurbo actually works?**

Kurbo's system was licensed from the [Stanford University Pediatric Weight Control Program](#), which is widely considered one of the best pediatric weight loss program in the country and boasts an 80 percent long-term success rate for participants in losing weight and maintaining that weight loss. Most other clinical weight-reduction programs have a 50 percent success rate. Kurbo has adapted the

Stanford approach (based on a combination of family-based coaching and the Stop Light Diet (also known as the “Traffic Light Diet”) created by Dr. Leonard Epstein) and turned it into a fun, engaging mobile app with virtual and live coaching. Outcomes of the Kurbo program include BMI reduction, increased self-esteem, improved feelings of self-control, reduced conflict between parents and kids over food and exercise, and a more physically active lifestyle.

The results were improved upon in a Kurbo pilot program, which included 200 people total and 50 children, an even mix of boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 18 years from a diverse mix of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. Kurbo saw that 88 percent of the Kurbo coaching program beta users lost or maintained weight and reduced their BMI during the program. Some other interesting results:

- Tracking: The more foods users tracked overall, the more weight they lost
- Red foods: The more *red* foods users track, the more they lose weight - being more aware of your red foods means you eat less reds, which means you lose more weight
- Confidence: The more confidence users have in achieving their goals, the more they actually do - higher confidence = greater weight loss
- Exercise: Users who do more intense, longer duration workouts tend to track more - users are proud of working hard and are eager to track it

### **Is Kurbo safe for a child to use?**

Kurbo's traffic light system is based on 30 years of research at Stanford University and SUNY Buffalo, and the food classification system is licensed from Stanford University's renowned [Pediatric Weight Control Program](#). More importantly, Kurbo is not a diet and it does not involve calorie-counting. Instead, it is a program focused on nutrition, balance, and portion control. Kurbo helps kids reach and maintain a healthy weight by changing their lifestyle habits and teaching them to make better food choices, not restricting their calories.

### **What do you mean by “personalized coaching?” Does that mean automated text messaging or actual phone calls or video sessions? How often will a child hear from his/her coach?**

With a full subscription to Kurbo, a participant will be assigned a specific, real live human coach who will check in with him or her once a week for 15 minutes by phone or video call. The coach provides support, motivation, and accountability from someone other than a parent. This allows the parent to take a break from policing the child's health and weight management. In addition to these live check-ins, Kurbo will send personalized messages via text to users with reminders to record their foods and activities and with suggestions and tips based on data entered in the tracker.

Users can also access the Kurbo mobile app and receive virtual coaching for free, which is system-generated feedback for users based on the foods and behaviors they have entered in the Kurbo tracker delivered by text or email. (i.e., "I see you've been eating lots of frozen yogurt; you might try frozen bananas for a yummy green foods treat" or "Have you tracked your foods today?").

### **What's the difference between Virtual and Live Coaching?**

- Virtual Coaching - system-generated feedback for users based on the foods and behaviors they have entered in the Kurbo tracker delivered by text or email.

- Live Coaching - a live human being coach who checks in and talks to the Kurbo user and who he/she can ask questions of in real-time by phone, video chat, text or email (depending on user's preference).

## **Who founded the company and what's her background?**

Kurbo Health was founded by Joanna Strober, a successful author and entrepreneur with more than 20 years of experience marketing products and services to women and moms, and Thea Runyan, Lead Behavior Coach for the Pediatric Weight Control Clinic at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.

The idea for Kurbo was born when Joanna had trouble finding an accessible, effective and reasonably priced program to help her own young son lose weight. She and Runyan worked together to create Kurbo as a solution, not just for her own family, but to help millions of kids, teenagers and their families worldwide eat healthier, lose weight and feel great.

Prior to starting Kurbo, Joanna was the coauthor of a best-selling book, "Getting to 50/50" about balancing motherhood and career, which led to many speaking engagements and media appearances to talk about changing roles and strategies for balancing family and career. Earlier in her career, Joanna served as a managing director at an investment management firm where she ran a private equity fund, and served as a partner at Bessemer Venture Partners, where she made consumer internet investments and acted as a strategic advisor to such successful companies as BabyCenter, Blue Nile, eToys and Gloss.com, among others.

## **What is the ideal age for Kurbo users – and how young can a user be?**

Kurbo is designed for kids and teens--children as young as 5 have been successfully coached with parental involvement--, and can benefit the entire family, through what has come to be known as the "halo effect." Because it is so easy, simple and fun, many adults also enjoy using Kurbo.

## **Who are some of the nutrition and behavioral experts associated with Kurbo?**

In addition to Thea Runyan, who served as the lead behavior coach for the Pediatric Weight Control Program at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford for more than 15 years, Kurbo has an advisory board with such well known experts in the field of pediatric and adolescent weight loss, including Dr. Len Epstein, PhD, Department of Pediatrics, SUNY (Buffalo), Distinguished Professor and Chief, Behavioral Medicine, Dr. Lee Sanders, MD, MPH and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Stanford, Dr. Alan Greene, a noted pediatrician and media expert in childhood health known for appearances on "The Doctors," "Good Morning America" and other shows, and Dr. Sophia Yen, MD, MPH; Clinical Assistant Professor, Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at Stanford See [here](#) for a full list of Kurbo Advisory Board members.

## **How many users does Kurbo have now, and are they achieving results on the program?**

Kurbo's app has been downloaded by thousands of people – children, teens and adult family members – and our coaching program has helped thousands of children and teens lose weight since launching in July 2014. In a recent pilot program, which included an even mix of boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 17 years and from a diverse mix of socioeconomic and racial

backgrounds, Kurbo saw 88% of the program users significantly reduced their BMI. This success has been replicated in a variety of pilot programs, including ones sponsored by the U.S. Army, Fortune 500 companies and the Government of Singapore.

A variety of success stories can be found here: <https://kurbo.com/success-stories/>

### **Does Kurbo require that a child have a smartphone? What if parents are trying to limit their child's screen time?**

A child can use Kurbo on a smartphone, iTouch, or iPad. They can share a device with their parent or use their own. They do not need to have their own device. Kids really like mobile devices, and they like responding to them, so they are a big positive in the program. This is one of the reasons they are more incentivized to get involved and follow the program. Also, tracking only takes 5-10 minutes/day and can be a social activity with the entire family.

### **What if a parent has concerns that Kurbo gives the wrong message – they just want their child to be healthy, and dieting seems unsafe. Couldn't Kurbo lead to an unhealthy obsession with weight and body image or poor self-esteem?**

Kurbo encourages children to eat healthier and make better choices. Kurbo is working closely with eating specialists to make sure that their program is safe for all children and not likely to be abused by children with eating issues. With Kurbo, a child is working closely with a personal coach who can help direct them to better, healthier choices if needed and identify if any problems arise. Also, with Kurbo, it's a program for the whole family – the tracker is available for parents as well, and they are actively involved in the process.

### **What advice do you have for parents looking to suggest this to their child, but who is uncomfortable about broaching the topic of weight for fear it will cause hurt feelings?**

At Kurbo, we know how difficult a conversation this can be. In fact, according to a [WebMD survey](#), no other conversation topic makes parents of teens more uncomfortable. Weight issues are more difficult for parents to broach than sex, smoking, drugs and alcohol. And to make matters worse, kids also find the topic embarrassing - 72 percent said the topic would be more embarrassing to them than to their parents. However, the downside is that if you don't bring it up, they are still likely to face the taunting and bullying at school about their weight. And the health concerns and complications are very real and serious. In the interest of helping families start healthy conversations, we offer the following tips on how to talk about food and weight available on our blog [here](#).

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