

Healthy Eating Habits for Life

You are the most important influence on your child and you can do many things to help them develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods can help your child get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of food, it's easier to plan family meals.

Cook together, eat together, talk together and make mealtime a family time!



Show by example

Eat vegetables, fruits and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

Go food shopping together

Grocery shopping can teach your child about food and nutrition. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains and protein foods come from. Let your children make healthy choices.

Get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters. Encourage your children to invent new snacks such as trail mix from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.

Focus on each other at the table

Turn off the television and all phones. Talk about fun and happy things at mealtimes.

Offer the same foods for everyone

Stop being a “short-order cook” by making different dishes to please children. Plan family meals where everyone eats the same foods.

Reward with attention, not food

Show your love with hugs and kisses. Do not offer sweets as rewards. This gives children the message that sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods.

Listen to your child

If your child says he or she is hungry between mealtimes, offer a small, healthy snack. Offer choices. Instead of saying “do you want broccoli for dinner?” ask “which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?”

Limit screen time

Allow no more than two hours a day of screen time for TV or computer games. Get up and move during commercials so you get some exercise.

Encourage physical activity

Make exercise fun for the whole family. Involve your children in the planning and then get involved instead of sitting on the sidelines. Set an example by being physically active.

Be a good food role model

Try new foods yourself. Offer one new food at a time. Always serve something your child likes along with the new food. Offer the new food at the beginning of a meal with your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.

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Enjoy a healthy snack

Fruits:	Apples and oranges
Grains:	Whole wheat crackers
Dairy:	String cheese
Protein:	Peanut butter
Vegetables:	Carrots, celery and broccoli

