

Healthy Children, Healthy Choices

from the Center for Disease Control website at
Www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpha/tips/healthy_children.htm

Parents are in charge!

As a parent, your responsibility is to buy healthy groceries and serve nutritious food to your growing children. Start by establishing a routine, even if it is difficult at first. This means a set time for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Once you have a routine for meals and snacks, meal times are more relaxed. Most children are happier on a schedule and become hungry at regular times. You'll feel happier about your parenting job when the family has a routine. So, be consistent! Children need a meal routine just like they need a bedtime routine. Plan for three meals and two snacks each day! Serve a vegetable or fruit at every meal. Fruits and vegetables are great for snacking too. Instead of rewarding your child with food, reward them with attention (hugs, kisses, and smiles) and playful activities.

Money-Saving Ideas For Better Health

Avoid arguments about high-fat, high-sugar foods by not bringing them into the house. Leave the candy, soft drinks, chips, and cookies at the store. Serve water when your child is thirsty. Water is cheap and healthy.

Portion Size for Young Children 2–6 Years Old

Serve child-sized portions, and let your child ask for more. Here are some examples of child-sized portions:

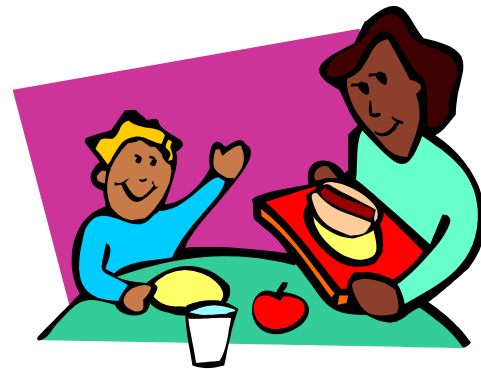
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of frozen veggies
- 1 or 2 little cooked broccoli spears
- 1/2 cup of tomato sauce
- 5 to 7 cooked baby carrots
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of melon
- 5 to 7 strawberries
- 1/2 cup of apple sauce
- 1 small tangerine
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of frozen or fresh berries
- 1 cup (8 fl. oz.) low-fat yogurt or nonfat milk
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup of macaroni-and-cheese, rice, pasta, or mashed potatoes

2oz. hamburger

- 1/4 cup ground meat such as turkey or pork, browned and drained
- 1 or 2 drumsticks

TV Time

Tired of hearing your children beg for sugary, high-fat foods? They may be influenced by too many commercials. Limit the amount of time your children watch TV to less than 2 hours a day. Remove the TV from your child's room. Find fun activities to do inside and outside your home: play hopscotch, jump rope, walk the dog, play hide-and-seek, or build an obstacle course in the hall.



Eat at Home

Part of having a healthy family includes spending time together. The family meal is a great way for everyone to get together, have a conversation, and eat together. Serving meals at home requires planning. Before you do your shopping, sit down and plan your meals for the week. Make a list of all the ingredients you'll need to prepare healthy, balanced meals. When fatigue kicks in and you want dinner on the table fast, your menu is already planned

and the ingredients are right on hand. Make sure to always include low-fat or nonfat dairy products, fruit, and vegetables. Limit the amount of processed ready to-eat-snacks you buy (such as potato chips or cookies). Prepackaged and processed foods are usually higher in calories and fats and often more expensive. For the price of a large bag of chips and box of cookies you can buy the items

below:

2 pounds of apples

1 pound of bananas

1 pound of carrots

3 pounds of potatoes

1 pound of peppers

Simplify your schedule for better quality of life. Say no to lessons, teams, and commitments that don't interest you or your child. If you or your child are feeling overwhelmed, consider limiting the number of organized activities your child participates in to one per season. Children thrive on routine. Routine meals, naps, outdoor play, and bedtime can make for a happy child who comes to the table rested and hungry for the food you have prepared. To serve a healthy and balanced meal at home, choose a variety of foods from several food groups. Children need to eat a variety of different foods every day. Use the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children to help guide your food choices.

Getting Children Involved

An easy way to get children to try new foods is to get them involved in meals. Here are some age-appropriate suggestions.

3-year-olds can:

Wipe table tops.

Scrub and rinse fruit and vegetables.

Wash and tear lettuce.

Snap green beans.

Bring ingredients from one place to another.

Mix ingredients and pour liquids.

Knead and shape yeast dough.

Put things in the trash.

Shake liquids in a covered container.

4-year-olds can also:

Peel oranges or hard cooked eggs.

Mash bananas with a fork.

Set a table.

Cut parsley or green onions with kid-safe scissors.

5-year-olds can also:

Measure ingredients.

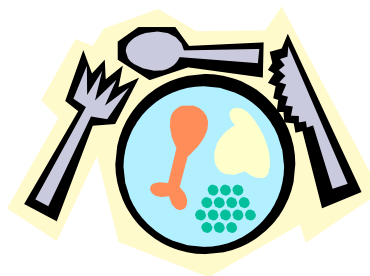
Use an egg beater or whisk.

Picky Eating Tips

Parents are role models! Set a good example by eating healthy foods yourself! Buy and try new fruits and vegetables. Drink water between meals. Set an eating routine at home for your meals and snacks. Your children will learn by your good example.

Don't expect your child to like something new the first time. Offer it again in a week. It usually takes several tries before children are willing to try new foods. Place a small amount of each food on your children's plates. Let them ask for more.

It's normal for children to explore foods. Young children often touch or smell the food on their plate. Children thrive on routine. Just like you have a bedtime routine, stick to a feeding routine. Your child is less likely to be tired or fussy at mealtimes! Offer healthy foods. Your child soon learns these are the foods in your home and will eventually eat!



Website
USDA's
Pyramid
Children:

<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/>

for the
Food Guide
for Young

Website for the USDA's Tips for Using the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children Booklet:

<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/PyrBook.pdf>

Also available through the Government Printing Office by calling (202) 512-1800 and asking for stock number 001-00004665-9. Price is \$5.00.