

Healthy eating for children

You want your child to eat healthy and be well-nourished. Every parent does. That means providing foods your child needs for normal growth that have enough protein, carbs, fats, vitamins, and minerals.

How can you help your child eat well and be healthy?

As a parent, do you worry that your child is either eating too much or too little? One way to help your child eat well and help you worry less is to know what your job is and what your child's job is when it comes to eating.

Remember:

- **Your** job is to offer healthy food choices at meals and snack times. You decide the **what, where,** and **when** of eating.
- **Your child's** job is to choose **how much** he or she will eat of the foods you serve.

By eating as little or as much as he or she wants at each meal and snack, over time your child will come to trust his or her own feelings of hunger.

Here are some other ways that you can help support your child's healthy eating habits:

- Try to eat together as a family as often as you can, and keep family meals pleasant and positive.
- Make healthy food choices for your family's meals! Children will notice and follow your example.
- Make mealtimes fairly predictable. Eat at around the same times every day and always at the table, even for snacks!
- Have meals and snacks often enough (for example, about every three hours for toddlers) so that your child doesn't get too hungry.
- Make meals a time for talking and enjoying each other's company—limit TV or other distractions.



Make mealtimes for talking and enjoying each other's company!

See the other side for more on helping your child stay healthy.

Helping your child stay healthy

Ways you can help your child stay healthy:



Take your child to all recommended well-child checkups. You can use this time to discuss your child's growth rate, activity level, and eating habits with the doctor.

Make physical activity a fun part of your family's daily life! Teach your child how to skip, hop, dance, play catch, and ride a bike!

Take walks after dinner. Encourage your older children to find their favorite ways to be active.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting TV and other screen time to two hours or less a day. Sit down with your child and plan out how he or she will use this time.



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