

Healthy Eating for the Whole Family

Eating healthier doesn't have to be unpleasant for your family. You can still eat some of the foods you love — just be sure to choose nutritious foods more often than unhealthy ones. Nutritious foods contain vitamins and minerals that help your children grow healthy and strong. These tips will help make healthy eating easy for the whole family.



- **Take it easy.** Change can be hard, so make one or two healthier food changes at a time. As you adjust to those, make one or two more changes.
- **Start simple.** You do not have to avoid all the foods your family loves. If you make foods forbidden, your child may want them even more. Instead, set limits by offering unhealthy foods less often and in smaller amounts.
- **Add variety.** Serve foods from each food group every day, and aim to include a range of foods from each group over time. Eating different foods helps your family get all the vitamins and minerals they need for good health.
- **Family affair.** As a parent, your part is to offer your child healthy foods. Let your child choose how much to eat. It is normal for children to eat a lot at some meals and less at others.
- **Set an example.** Teach your kids how you want them to eat by eating well yourself. Eating together is the best way to teach your family healthy eating habits. Make mealtime family time by sitting together and turning the TV off.
- **Shop together.** At the grocery store, ask your child to select one or two fruits or vegetables. This helps children learn their choices are important and can make them more interested in eating the healthy food they choose. Shop when the store is less crowded and after a meal or snack to prevent tantrums, unnecessary purchases or unhealthy snacks.
- **Ask the doctor.** If your child has food allergies, special needs, or is overweight or underweight, ask your pediatrician what he or she should eat. Your doctor can answer questions about healthy eating for the whole family.

For more information, visit Heart.org, Nutrition.gov or EatRight.org.



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How to Handle a Picky Eater

Learning healthy eating habits can help your child grow up strong and fit. Your child may not want to try new foods, and fighting over food is no fun. These tips can help your family learn to eat healthy foods together.



- **Start small.** It is normal for kids to refuse new foods. To help your child adapt to new foods, serve a very small amount and try one new food at a time. Offer the new food along with foods your child already enjoys.
- **Be gentle.** Forcing kids to eat can lead to fighting. Ask your child to taste the food instead of forcing him or her to eat it. Set a good example by eating the new food yourself.
- **Keep trying.** You may have to serve a new food 10 to 20 times before your child accepts it. Don't give up — the food will become familiar to your child over time.
- **Don't reward.** Offering dessert for trying a new food can make kids think that a sweet food is better than a healthy one.
- **Spark interest.** Ask your child about the colors and shapes of the foods served to help your child become more interested in trying new foods.
- **One meal for the whole family.** Avoid making different foods for each family member. Put the foods you made for the whole family in front of your child. If your child refuses the food, put that portion in the refrigerator for later. Remember to serve at least one healthy food that your child is familiar with as part of each meal.

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