



Children's Health

Nutrition

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN EAT HEALTHILY

Healthy eating begins during infancy and continues into adulthood. Teaching your children how to eat a healthy diet now builds a solid foundation for them when they become adults.



TIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

- ▶ For the first four to six months of life, feed your baby only breast milk or formula.
- ▶ Babies are ready for solid food when: their birth weight doubles; they can control their heads and necks; they can sit up with support; they show interest in the food you eat; and they can show you that they're full by turning their heads away or refusing to open their mouths.
- ▶ Don't serve honey to children under 1 year of age. Infant botulism is a very serious nerve and muscle illness that can be caused by eating honey.
- ▶ Variety is the key. If you offer a large variety of healthy foods, your child will grow to enjoy many of them.
- ▶ For toddlers, offer foods with a variety of colors and textures. Cut food into interesting shapes and arrange them attractively on the plate.
- ▶ Warm food is more appealing to toddlers than hot food.
- ▶ Avoid forcing children to eat unwanted food.
- ▶ Place small amounts of food on their plates. They can ask for more.
- ▶ Serve snacks at the same time every day and space them so they won't interfere with meals.
- ▶ Healthy snack foods include: fruits and fruit juices, raw vegetables served with fat-free dressing, cereal, yogurt, cheese and soup.
- ▶ If you don't want your child to eat junk food, keep it out of the house.
- ▶ Choose cookies and other desserts—such as fig bars and oatmeal raisin cookies—that are low in fat and sugar and contain nutrients.
- ▶ Respect your child's ability to decide how much to eat.
- ▶ Be a good role model for nutritious eating.
- ▶ Avoid using food as a reward. This may give your children the message that they can reward themselves with food, and it may lead to a lifetime of using food as consolation.
- ▶ Encourage your children to eat only when they're hungry.