

Healthy Eating Habits for Kids



With childhood obesity in North America tripling over the past 20 years, what kids are eating has become a major concern. Here are some ideas to help establish a pattern for a healthy lifestyle:

1. **Do** set a good example for your child to copy. Share mealtimes and eat the same healthy foods.
2. **Do** discourage snacking on sweets and fatty foods. Keep plenty of healthy foods, such as fruits, raw vegetables, low-fat crackers, and yogurt, around for children to eat between meals.
3. **Do** allow children to follow their natural appetites when deciding how much to eat.
4. **Do** encourage children to enjoy fruits and vegetables by giving them a variety from an early age.
5. **Don't** give skim or 1-percent-fat milk to children under the age of 5 unless your doctor prescribes it; at this stage, children need the extra calories in whole milk.
6. **Do** ask children to help prepare meals. If parents rely mostly on convenience foods, children may not learn to enjoy cooking.
7. **Don't** add unnecessary sugar to drinks and foods.
8. **Don't** accustom children to extra salt by adding it to food or placing the shaker on the table.
9. **Don't** give whole nuts to children under the age of 5, who may choke on them. Peanut butter and chopped nuts are fine as long as the child is not allergic to them.

10. Don't force children to eat more than they want.

11. Don't use food as a bribe.

12. Don't make children feel guilty about eating any type of food.

Easy, Healthful Snacks Stock up on healthful snacks that children and teenagers can nibble on throughout the day.

- Breads and crackers with spreads such as peanut butter, low-fat cheese, canned tuna or sardines, and lean cold cuts.
- Rice cakes and whole-grain crackers or breadsticks.
- Fresh and dried fruits.
- Yogurt.
- Sticks of carrot, celery, or other raw vegetables, and cherry tomatoes with nutritious dips.
- Plain popcorn.
- Breakfast cereals.
- Water, milk, or fruit juice.

Source: <http://www.rd.com/health/healthy-eating-habits-for-kids-12-dos-and-donts/>