

# Healthy Eating FOR KIDS



Childhood obesity has become a major health concern, causing health problems in children that previously weren't seen until adulthood, such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol. If you're a parent or caregiver, you can help your kids develop healthy habits early in life that will bring lifelong benefits. Teach them how to make **smart choices** and how delicious those decisions can be!



**Be a good role model.** You don't have to be perfect all the time, but if kids see you trying to eat right and make wise choices, they'll notice. You'll send a message that good health is important in your family.

**Keep things positive.** Kids don't like to hear what they can't have, so focus on what they can have instead. Give them a few healthy options and let them choose. Praise them for good decisions.

**Make dinnertime family time.** Turn off the screens and develop healthy habits — as well as conversation skills — together.

**Get kids involved** in planning and cooking meals. They'll learn valuable skills and may be more willing to try things they've helped make.

**Make a game of reading food labels.** You'll all learn more about what you're eating. Teach kids how to think critically about how foods and beverages are advertised and promoted to kids, too.

**Include more vegetables and fruits,** whether fresh, frozen or canned. Add them to dishes your family already loves and use them as healthier sides, snacks and desserts. Avoid salty sauces and sugary syrups.

**Try to cut down the amount of sodium** your kids eat. If using packaged foods, compare nutrition labels and choose the product with the least amount of sodium. Watch for the salty six — these foods add the most sodium to kids' diets: pizza, breads and rolls, cold cuts and cured meats, savory snacks, sandwiches and cheese.

**Cut back on added sugars** in your family's diet. Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda and sports drinks are the biggest source of added sugars for most of us. Encourage kids to drink more water instead.

