

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.

