Healthy Eating for a Lifetime of Health

Making healthy meals together at home that follow healthy eating guidelines is a great way to have family time and teach your child healthy eating habits! Children model what they see, so setting the example of healthy eating can help prepare your child for good lifelong habits.

What does healthy eating look like?

A good way to make sure your family is following healthy eating guidelines is to use ChooseMyPlate as a guide.

A healthy plate looks like this:

- Non-starchy vegetables include broccoli, spinach, and peppers.
- Healthy grains include whole grain bread, brown rice, and oatmeal.
- Lean protein includes fish, beans, and skinless chicken.
- Fruits include blueberries, strawberries, and apples.
- Healthy dairy include low-fat yogurt, cheese, and milk.

For more information, you can visit: https://www.choosemyplate.gov/
What if my child is a picky eater?

Many children struggle with trying new foods. This can make mealtimes feel like a battle. There are several techniques that you can try to make mealtimes more pleasant for you and your child while still making sure that all of their nutritional needs are met.

Stick to a routine

- Offering meals and snacks at the same time each day helps you to make sure your child has the opportunity to eat healthy foods throughout the day and helps them know what is expected of them.

Give your child some control

- It can help to let your child have some choice in what they eat. This gives them a sense of power and control. Have your child plan meals with you, or offer the choice between a few healthy options for a snack. “Would you like carrots or celery today?”

Model healthy eating

- Seeing everyone around them eating a new healthy food, especially an older sibling, can encourage your child to try something new.

Pair new foods with their favorite foods

- When you’re trying to introduce a new food into your child’s diet, it can help to pair it with their favorite food as they get used to the new, healthy food. “First let’s have a bite of (familiar/favorite food), then some (new food), and then more (familiar/favorite food)”

Try to stay calm and patient. Encouraging healthy eating can be a challenge, but don’t get discouraged! With time and consistency, your child will develop healthy habits that last a lifetime!

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References:
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