



Get a Healthy Start on Eating Smart

One of the best ways you can help your family stay healthy is to focus on good nutrition and develop smart eating habits early. You may not realize it, but you are the best example your children have when it comes to developing their own eating habits. Use this opportunity, and the following tips, to show them the best way to get a healthy start on eating smart.

Guidelines for Eating Smart

Eat breakfast. Teach your children that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. By skipping breakfast, you're setting your child up to be tired and hungry throughout the day.

Drink water. By keeping your children's beverage intake mostly to water, you're teaching them a healthier way to quench their thirst. Fruit-flavored drinks and soda both contain extra, empty calories. Try to have your child drink at least four large glasses of water each day, and more if they're very active.

Can the soda. A 12-ounce can of regular soda has at least 10 teaspoons of sugar in it, and while diet soda may seem like a good alternative, it still contains artificial ingredients as well as caffeine.

Downsize, not supersize. How much you eat is just as important as what you eat. Keep in mind that serving sizes vary. Learn to keep an eye on how big the plate is and how much you eat, both at home and when dining out.

Snack attack. Most snack foods are high in calories and fat. Instead of snack cakes, candy bars, or chips, try offering your child these foods instead: dried fruit, lowfat yogurt, air-popped popcorn, fruit cocktail in light syrup or juice, unsalted roasted nuts, frozen grapes, bananas, or all-fruit pops.

Filling, fantastic fiber. Foods rich in dietary fiber are great for many reasons. First, they're filling. Second, they can help improve digestion and provide long-term energy. Foods rich in fiber include bran cereals, fresh and dried fruits, broccoli, asparagus, peas, corn, cabbage, brussels sprouts, whole grain breads, brown rice, lentils, and popcorn—air-popped with a small amount of salt.

Calcium for strong bones. To ensure that your child's bones grow strong, make sure that they're getting enough calcium. Aim for three to four servings each day. Foods rich in calcium include skim milk, lowfat yogurt or cheese, cottage cheese, certain green vegetables (like broccoli and spinach), calcium-fortified orange juice, calcium-fortified tofu, and salmon. A great after-school snack loaded with calcium is a smoothie made with lowfat vanilla yogurt, lowfat milk, and a frozen banana. (You can also try adding frozen strawberries, blueberries, or raspberries.)

Lean protein. Protein is a key nutrient. Lean protein foods should be the main source of protein in your diet. These foods include skinless chicken or turkey breast, fish, shellfish, ham, Canadian bacon, lean red meats, egg whites, lowfat milk, lowfat yogurt, lowfat cheeses, legumes (such as baked beans, kidney beans, chick peas, lima beans), tofu, and soybeans.



Nutrition Tips

Fast foods are fat foods. Today's families are often busy, and the convenience of fast food is very appealing. However, most fast-food restaurants offer selections that are high in fat and calories. If you are eating out, make the healthiest choices you can. Bring home a pizza with vegetable toppings. Go for a small plain hamburger, a grilled chicken sandwich, or a green salad with lowfat dressing.

Variety is valuable. Offering your children a variety of foods from an early age will encourage them to try new things. Many parents assume that kids will only stick to one or two foods they enjoy, but the more you offer them different things, the more likely they are to try—and enjoy—healthy options.

Don't diet. Low-carb, no carb, high-protein, low-protein. No matter what you may hear, diets are just short-term attempts to fix what requires a long-term solution. Don't diet yourself, and never put your child on a diet. Eat modest portions of a variety of foods, including lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, and your child will learn that it's moderation and variety that matter.

Reading Food Labels:

The new food labels carry an up-to-date, easier-to-use nutrition information guide which is required on almost all packaged foods. The Nutrition Facts labels serve as a key to help in planning a healthy diet.

Serving sizes. All values on the label are based on the serving size. If you eat two servings, multiply all values by two. Use serving sizes to compare two different products.

List of nutrients covers those most important to the health of today's consumers, most of whom need to worry about getting too much of certain nutrients (fat, for example), rather than too few vitamins or minerals, as in the past.

The label of larger packages may now tell the number of calories per gram of fat, carbohydrate, and protein.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 260		Calories from Fat 120	
		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	13g	20%	
Saturated Fat	5g	25%	
Cholesterol	30mg	10%	
Sodium	660mg	28%	
Total Carbohydrate	31g	10%	
Dietary Fiber	0g	0%	
Sugars	5g		
Protein	5g		
Vitamin A	4%	•	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium	15%	•	Iron 4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat	9	•	Carbohydrate 4
		•	Protein 4

New title signals that the label contains the newly required information.

Calories from fat are now shown on the label to help consumers meet dietary guidelines that recommend people get no more than 30 percent of the calories in their overall diet from fat.

% Daily Value shows how a food fits into the overall daily diet.

Daily Values. Some are maximums, as with fat (65 grams or less); others are minimums, as with carbohydrate (300 grams or more). The daily values for a 2,000- and 2,500-calorie diet must be listed on the label of larger packages.

