

# Tips for Parents

(Taken from the United States Government Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Education)

## Eat Smart!

- ◆ Develop healthy eating habits at an early age.
- ◆ Set an example for active living by moving around with your kids.
- ◆ Try to keep track of your children's meal/snack and physical activity patterns so you can help them balance the amount and types of food they eat with the amount of physical activity they perform.
- ◆ Encourage your family to eat at least 5 servings of brightly colored vegetables and fruits a day.
- ◆ Start the day with 100% fruit or vegetable juice.
- ◆ Slice fruit on top of cereal.
- ◆ Serve salad with lunch.
- ◆ Try an apple as an afternoon snack.
- ◆ Include vegetables with dinner.
- ◆ Limit candy, soft drinks, chips and cookies.
- ◆ Serve children child-sized portions and let them ask for more if they are still hungry.
- ◆ Don't force children to clean their plates.
- ◆ Try measuring food items to learn to estimate the amount of food on a plate.
- ◆ Choose a variety of foods.
- ◆ If you have pizza, balance it with salad and low-fat or nonfat milk and fruit.
- ◆ Establish a family meal routine and set times for dinner when possible.
- ◆ Eat together as often as you can.
- ◆ Take charge of the foods your children eat. When you serve a meal, your child can choose to eat it or not; but, do not offer to substitute an unhealthy alternative when your child refuses to eat what you've served.
- ◆ Restrict children's access to the refrigerator or snack cupboard.
- ◆ Turn off the TV during meals and limit snacking when watching TV.
- ◆ Reward your kids with praise and fun activities rather than with food.
- ◆ Involve your children in meal planning and food preparation. They will likely eat what they help make.
- ◆ Teach your children how to read food labels. Look for low fat and low carbohydrates.
- ◆ Limit foods that are high in fat, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars.
- ◆ Use low fat cooking methods such as baking, roasting, and grilling, and choose healthy fats when you use them, such as olive or canola oils.
- ◆ Serve water, low-fat or nonfat milk with and between meals. Only children under two years always need to drink whole milk.
- ◆ Teach your children how to make wise food choices away from home—at school cafeterias, restaurants, and vending machines.
- ◆ Buy in season fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Purchase canned (not in heavy syrup) fruits and vegetables when fresh ones are not available.
- ◆ Never shop for food when you are hungry.
- ◆ Assemble snacks at home in small baggies and use foods such as nuts and seeds, and low-fat cheese.
- ◆ Make frozen juice pops.
- ◆ Review the coming week's school lunch menu and talk about making healthy choices.

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## Get Moving!

- Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Playing hopscotch, tossing a ball back and forth, and dancing are some good ways for your child to be active.
- Be a physically active role model and have fun with your kids. Adults need at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Walk with your child at every available opportunity.
- Take a family walk after dinner instead of watching TV or playing computer games.
- Plan active weekends: biking, hiking, skating, walking, or playing ball.
- Take a trip to the park, skating rink, or swimming pool.
- Offer to join your child in his/her favorite physical activity, or enroll your child in a group exercise program.
- Include children in active chores such as dog walking, house cleaning, car washing, and yard work.
- Limit inactive behavior such as television watching and computer time.
- Do physical activity with your children during commercials such as marching or stretching. This helps reinforce the importance of movement.
- Avoid using TV as a child sitter or pacifier. Offer active alternatives to screen time—jumping rope, playing hide-and-seek or running an errand.
- Keep TVs out of children's rooms.
- Give your children gifts that encourage physical activity – active games, sporting equipment, or Frisbees.
- Start a log of how your family keeps active and review it at the end of each week.
- Discover what physical activities the community offers.
- Encourage the use of stairs instead of elevators and escalators.
- Take your children food shopping and let them pick out a new vegetable to try.

