

Healthy Eating

To Promote Healthy Weights
in Children 2-5 years Old



Healthy eating and good nutrition help children grow and be strong. This is true for all children at any weight.

Taking steps as a whole family helps everyone to enjoy healthy eating. Be a role model for healthy eating – actions speak louder than words!

Focus on healthy eating and not on a child's weight. Do not put your child on a weight loss diet. Children need enough healthy foods everyday for energy to grow, learn and play.

Healthy eating can be difficult in today's busy world when we are surrounded by unhealthy choices. The good news is that small changes can make a big difference!

EAT HEALTHY FOODS TOGETHER, BE ACTIVE EVERY DAY AND LOVE YOUR OWN BODY. YOUR CHILD IS LEARNING FROM EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO.

For a copy of Canada's Food Guide call **1-800-O-CANADA** or visit www.healthcanada.ca/foodguide

Canadian Diabetes Association toll free information line **1-800-BANTING (226-8464)** or www.diabetes.ca

Dial-A-Dietitian: dial **811** or call toll-free **1-800-667-3438**;
Greater Vancouver: **604-732-9191**
Or visit www.dialadietitian.org



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TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- 1 Plan ahead.** Try the following to help you plan ahead for healthy meals and snacks:
 - Use a shopping list. Include ingredients needed to prepare meals and snacks.
 - Have a well stocked kitchen to make it easier to prepare quick and healthy family meals.
 - Cook when you have more time. Make twice as much of whatever you are cooking and freeze half.
 - Wash and chop vegetables ahead of time.
 - Make no-cook meals! A tuna sandwich, an apple and milk can be just as nutritious as a hot meal.

Try using the meal planner and shopping list at www.dietitians.ca.

- 2 Eat together as a family 3 or more times a week.** Make mealtimes pleasant by: turning the TV off, using an answering machine, and asking everyone about their day. Visit www.bcdf.ca and link to *Eat Together Eat Better* for more information.

- 3 Save restaurant and take-out meals for special occasions.** Some tips for making healthy choices when eating out are:
 - Have your children share an entrée.
 - Have gravy, sauces and dressings served on the side.
 - Request a substitute of fresh vegetables and dip instead of fries.

For more ideas on making healthy meals at home, see *Fast Food Options - Tips for Making Healthy Choices* at www.dietitians.ca and www.diabetes.ca.

- 4 Plan for 3 meals and 1-2 snacks at about the same times each day.** When children "graze" – eat and sip on drinks all day – they are less likely to know when they are hungry or full. Hunger cues are important for developing healthy eating habits.



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- 5 Choose foods from Canada's Food Guide.**
The 4 food groups are:
 - Vegetables & Fruit
 - Grain Products
 - Milk or Alternatives
 - Meat or AlternativesUse a small size plate for children and aim for $\frac{1}{2}$ plate of vegetables and fruit, $\frac{1}{4}$ plate of grain products and $\frac{1}{4}$ plate of meat or alternatives. Add 1 serving of milk or alternatives.
- 6 Offer small servings of healthy foods as snacks.**
Package snack foods in small servings yourself or buy them already packaged in small servings. For example, 3 crackers with cheese and $\frac{1}{2}$ an orange cut into thin slices is a great, healthy snack.
For some great healthy snack ideas, visit www.heartandstroke.bc.ca.
- 7 Offer water and skim or 1% milk more often.**
Water is a healthy, low-cost choice. Milk contains calcium and vitamin D, which help build healthy bones and teeth. Limit sugary drinks, such as pop, fruit drinks, iced tea, and slushies, as they are low in nutrients and can lead to weight gain.
- 8 Choose vegetables and fruit more often than juice.** Children do not need juice. If you choose to offer juice, limit to less than 125 to 175ml ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) per day.

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