

A Healthy Relationship with Food

To Promote Healthy Weights in Children 2-5 years Old



Developing a healthy relationship with food is just as important as eating healthy food to support healthy growth and development.

Parents and caregivers play a key role in helping young children develop a healthy relationship with food. Children are born knowing when they are hungry and when they are full. By teaching children to listen to their bodies, you are supporting them to have the skills that they need for healthy eating as they get older.

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

For more information, contact 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 A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- 1 Eat healthy meals and snacks together as a family at the table.** Studies show that children who eat meals with an adult are healthier, learn better, and have better social skills. Children learn to eat what their parents eat. When you eat together you become a positive role model for your child. If you never eat together, pick one meal a week to start - and go from there.
- 2 Make mealtimes calm and pleasant.** Limit distractions by turning off the TV, using an answering machine, and asking everyone to share something about their day. It is best not to talk about how much or how little your child is eating.
- 3 Slow down.** Give yourself and your child enough time to notice when you feel full. When we eat too fast it is easier to overeat.
- 4 Serve small portions.** Offer more food if your child asks for more.
- 5 Let your child decide how much and if they want to eat during meals and snacks.** Often a child will only want a taste, or to eat a few finger-fulls or bites. Trust that your child knows how much, or how little, to eat. Your child may be less likely to eat the healthy foods that you have served if you beg, bribe, threaten, force or play games to try to get your child to eat. If your child chooses not to eat and asks for food between meals and snacks, you can reoffer the meal previously refused or say "no" until the next meal or snack time.
- 6 Offer meals and snacks at about the same times each day.** Young children do better when they have a daily routine. Planning meals and snacks to make this easier. Visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca for ideas on planning.
- 7 Serve healthy foods.** Adults decide what, when and where food is offered to children. For information on offering healthy foods at meals and snacks, see *Healthy Eating to Promote Healthy Weights in Children 2-5 years old* brochure. Visit www.heartandstroke.bc.ca for recipe ideas to serve.

