



**Healthy Choices
for Kids!**

**What you can do to help your children
develop healthy eating habits.**

Moms often ask:

Q. How do I know my kids are getting enough food and nutrition?

A. Young children eat when they are hungry and usually stop when they are full. It's also helpful to know that before eating, their stomachs are about the size of their fist. So what may not look like much food to you may actually be just right for their small stomachs.

It's okay for them to leave food on their plate.

Q. What can I do to help my children develop healthy eating habits?

A. It can take patience. Try some of these tips that have worked for many moms.

- 1. Offer your children the same foods as the rest of the family.** Your child may not care for all that's offered, and that's okay. Kids eat better when they have the freedom to select what to eat from what you offer.
- 2. Try to set regular times for meals and snacks.** A daily routine of regular meal times and snack times promotes good eating habits. It helps kids learn there is always another chance for them to eat what they need.
- 3. Lay out a variety of healthy foods and then let kids serve themselves.** Children learn and gain confidence when they are allowed to make choices about what to eat. Remember, a serving size for young kids is smaller than for teens or an adult.
- 4. Listen to them when they say they are full.** Young kids will eat the amount they need. Toddlers have a strong sense of hunger, appetite, and fullness. They are likely to stop eating when they are full rather than when the food is gone. It's okay for them to leave food on their plate. Appetites can vary—sometimes your child won't eat much and other times they'll want more.





Make meals and memories together.

Teach your kids to create healthy meals. It's a lesson they'll use for life. Kids like to try foods they help make. It's a great way to encourage your child to eat fruits and vegetables. They feel good about doing something "grown-up." Give them small jobs to do. Praise their efforts. Their smiles will light up your kitchen.



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On busy weeknights...

cooking together can mean more "mommy and me" time. Ask your child to help with easy tasks, like adding veggie toppings to a cheese pizza. Let your children choose which veggies to add to soup (only an adult should heat and stir hot soup). Make sandwiches together; let your children decide what to put into the sandwich.



Children under age 4 can choke on popcorn, nuts, fruit skins, dried fruit, and raw vegetables.



Make some meals special.

- Have a color contest and see how many green, red, yellow, and orange fruits and vegetables you can include in one meal.
- Name a food your child helps create. Make a big deal of serving “Karla’s Salad” or “Corey’s Sweet Potatoes” for dinner.
- Try a “Make Your Own” night. Let your family put together its own soft tacos, baked potato bar, sandwiches, pizza, or salads. Place the ingredients within easy reach and let the fun begin.



Quick snacks from WIC foods

- Mix peanut butter with applesauce and serve on whole wheat toast
- Make snack mix from a variety of breakfast cereals
- Make a whole wheat tortilla with melted cheese (quesadilla)
- Mix peanut butter into yogurt and serve with apple slices
- Pour milk in a jar, add a teaspoon of vanilla, orange juice, and shake with ice
- Make muffins from bran flakes cereal and add fresh blueberries
- Steam vegetables, like baby carrots and green beans, and serve with dip

