



Helping Your Child Eat Healthy for Life

Learning healthy habits today can help your child grow up strong and fit. As a parent, you can teach your child to make better food choices. There are also things you can let your child do on his or her own.

Goals to Keep in Mind

Keep these goals in mind when making food choices:

- **Balance and variety.** Balance means eating foods from each of the basic food groups. Variety means eating a wide range of the foods in each group. Eating a mix of foods helps to get the vitamins and minerals your child's body needs.
- **Moderation.** With moderation, all foods, including your child's favorites, can fit into a healthy eating plan. Moderation means avoiding too much of any one food or type of food. Don't make any foods forbidden. But limit foods such as sweets, chips, and other junk foods.



Eat nutritious foods yourself. This is a great way to show your child what foods are best for her.

What You Can Do

Your part is to give your child healthy food choices. You can also teach by example. That means eating nutritious foods yourself. Your role is to:

- **Shop.** Buy many kinds of healthy foods. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- **Prepare meals.** Make healthy meals at home. Ask your child to help!
- **Serve foods.** Offer different kinds of healthy foods to your child at each meal.
- **Lead by example.** Your child watches you. So show your kids how you want them to eat by eating well yourself.

What to Let Your Child Do

Your child's part is simple. Let your child choose which healthy foods to eat, and how much to eat at each meal. Your child's role is to:

- **Decide what to eat.** Let your child choose from different healthy foods at each meal.
- **Tell you when he or she is full.** Your child might eat a lot at some meals. At other meals, your child may not eat as much. This is normal. It balances out over time.
- **Taste a small amount of new foods.** Don't expect your child to eat a whole serving of a new food. But do ask your child to taste it. Sooner or later, your child may start choosing it without your prompting.

When to Talk to the Doctor

If your child has food allergies or other special needs, be sure to talk to his or her doctor about what your child should eat.