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Nutrition Tips for Kids

Why is healthy eating important for my child?

Many more children in the United States are being diagnosed with high cholesterol, or as overweight or obese. These conditions can cause many health problems for your child such as diabetes and high blood pressure, both now and as he or she moves into adulthood.

By helping your child eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly, you can reduce his or her risk of experiencing these health problems.

How can I help my child eat right?

for your child. If you prepare healthy foods for your family and eat healthy [Set an example](#) foods yourself, your child will eat healthier, too.

Make sure to prepare a variety of foods, so your family gets all the vitamins and minerals their bodies need to function properly.

For more information on healthy eating, visit our handout for adults on [making healthier choices](#).

What are some examples of healthy meals?

Breakfast: The first meal of the day is a good time to give your child foods that are high in fiber. Whole-grain breads, cereals, fruit, low-fat or nonfat cheeses and yogurt are also good breakfast foods. Use skim or low-fat milk rather than whole or 2% milk. Fruit juice is usually high in calories and has less nutrients than whole fruit (fresh or canned).

Lunch: Use whole-grain breads and rolls to make a healthier sandwich. Whole grains increase the total fiber in your child's diet and are less processed than enriched white bread. Give your child whole-grain crackers with soups, chili and stew, and always serve fresh fruit (with the skin) with meals instead of chips or other high-calorie options.

Here are some ways to make healthier sandwiches:

- Use low-fat or fat-free lunch meats. They are good in sandwiches or cut into strips on top of a salad.
- Buy leaner meats, such as turkey, chicken or veggie dogs.
- Put leftover chicken or turkey strips in a tortilla to make a cold fajita (add strips of raw red and green peppers and onions). Use fat-free sour cream as a dressing.
- Stuff a pita-bread "pocket" with vegetables, fat-free cheese and bits of leftover grilled chicken.
- Cut up vegetables such as onion, carrot, celery and green peppers to add to tuna salad. Mix vegetables and water-packed tuna with fat-free mayonnaise or, for a different taste, mix with a fat-free salad dressing.
- Chunky bits of leftover chicken mixed with fat-free mayonnaise, raisins, shredded carrots and sliced almonds is a great chicken salad. Serve it in a pita-bread pocket. Top it with salsa for a Southwestern flavor.
- Mix cranberry sauce and fat-free mayonnaise to add to a turkey sandwich.



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- When buying peanut butter, choose an "all-natural" option. For jelly, buy one that 100% fruit and does not contain high fructose corn syrup. This will make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches much healthier.
- Sliced ham and low-fat or fat-free cheese with mustard is great on rye bread.
- Low-fat cheese makes a good sandwich with tomato slices and mustard or fat-free mayonnaise on a whole-grain roll.
- Slice leftover pork tenderloin and top with barbecue sauce for a hot or cold sandwich.
- Make grilled-cheese sandwiches with low-fat or fat-free cheese and serve them with raw carrot and celery sticks.

What snacks are good for my child?

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low- or nonfat dair also make great snacks for children. Here are some ideas for ways to serve these foods to your kids:

Fruits:

- Bits of fruit stirred into nonfat yogurt
- Strawberries
- Raisins
- Grapes
- Pineapple chunks
- Orange or grapefruit sections
- Bananas cooked lightly in apple juice
- Apple slices with all natural peanut butter
- Dried fruit mixes

Vegetables:

- Carrot sticks
- Celery sticks with all natural peanut butter
- Raw broccoli and cauliflower florets with a low-fat dip or salsa

Protein:

- 1% fat or fat-free cottage cheese or ricotta cheese
- Water-packed tuna mixed with fat-free mayonnaise on top of celery sticks or whole-grain crackers
- Fat-free yogurt topped with sunflower seeds, chopped dried fruit or a spoonful of oat bran

Whole grains:

- Cereals or cereal bars that are low in sugar and fat, and high in fiber and protein
- Whole-grain crackers, breads or bagels

Sweets and desserts:



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- Fat-free frozen yogurt
- Juice bars
- Sherbet and sorbet

Other Organizations

- [Revolution Health Parenting Community](http://www.revolutionhealth.com/forums/parenting)
<http://www.revolutionhealth.com/forums/parenting>
- [Revolution Health Weight Management Community](http://www.revolutionhealth.com/forums/weight-management)
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