

Make Healthy Enjoyable



What are ideas to make healthy eating and physical activity choices fun and appealing?

A Family Guide to Promoting Healthy Habits for Children

Kids come in all sizes, shapes and weights. But one thing makes them all the same: Every kid needs help and support to create healthy eating and physical activity habits to last a lifetime!

As adults, it's up to us to provide that help and support. Here are some simple ideas to help you get started:

Relax and Think Fun

Know your roles for a more relaxing mealtime

Yes, it is possible to end mealtime battles over food. Experts will tell you it is simple, but requires that you consistently remember adult and kid mealtime and snacking responsibilities:

- Adults are responsible for offering a variety and balance of foods for meals and snacks.
- Kids decide how much, and even whether or not they eat.

Tip #1: When introducing new foods, first reactions aren't always good. Keep trying! It may take kids 8-10 tries to truly know if they like or dislike a food.

Tip #2: Be a positive role model. Try a variety of foods yourself and avoid "wrinkling your nose" at things you don't care for. Turn off the TV at mealtime so the kids will notice your healthy choices!

Tip #3: Offer at least one favorite food at meals when new foods are offered.

Get more minutes in motion with active play – every day

Play sounds more fun and it's just as healthy as exercise workouts! Get silly along with kids by making up active games. Try these goofy ideas—they are sure to make little ones giggle—or come up with your own:

- Create an "animal walk game"... walk like a duck, hop like a rabbit, crawl like crab and more.
- Practice dance steps together, and create a few of your own.

Help Kids Have a "Healthy Me" Feeling

Praise – don't lecture

Most of us respond better to positive feedback, and kids are no exception. Look for opportunities to praise their efforts to eat healthier. For example, praise your child for choosing an orange for a snack instead of lecturing him/her about taking extra cookies.

Focus on healthy choices – not weight

Helping your child feel good about his/her looks and abilities (regardless of weight) is the best way to develop healthy habits.

There are no "good" or "bad" foods

When foods are denied, kids usually want them that much more and that creates guilt. Learn together how to create healthy balance by choosing high-fat and sugary foods less often, recognizing serving sizes, and increasing minutes in motion through active play.



CIGNA

835123 08/10

