

Easy Tips to Help Your Kids Eat Healthier

If bad eating habits persist for a long time, they can be hard to change especially when they have become comfortable routines. However, by bringing healthy foods in and keeping unhealthy foods out of your home, it is possible to promote healthy eating habits, even with the pickiest children.

Providing an environment where your child can make healthy nutritional choices is an important step you can take to improve the health of your kid. Whether you are attempting to persuade your tween to drink something other than soda or trying to cajole your toddler to give peas a chance, the following healthy eating tips might be worth a try.

Make a schedule

Children should eat every four to five hours: three meals, two snacks and plenty of fluids. If you plan it, your baby's diet will be much more balanced, and he or she will be less irritable because they will not be famished. Put a refrigerator in the car when you go out with your kids and keep it stocked with carrots, yogurt, pretzels, and water, so you don't have to depend on fast food or other unhealthy beverages.

Avoid placing restrictions on food

Placing restrictions on food increases the risk that the child may develop eating disorders such as bulimia or anorexia later in life. This can also hurt their optimal growth and development. Instead of banning food items, discuss all healthy and nutritional options there - encourage your family to choose fruits, vegetables, lean meats, whole grains and low-fat dairy products while avoiding high-processed and junk foods.

Plan dinners

If you think a weekly menu is too daunting, start with planning two or three times a day. A good dinner doesn't need to be fancy, but it must be balanced. You should include bread (whole grain) or pasta or rice, as well as a fruit or a vegetable; and a food item with rich protein content like cheese, beans, or meat. You can also make simple Mexican chili or simple entree soups in advance. Besides planning dinner at home, going for a weekly dinner at your kid's favorite restaurant is not only a healthy substitute for a nutritious diet but will also let your children experience a different taste.

Cut back on junk and keep healthy food at hand

Remember, your children are not in charge of food entering the house. Children will obviously eat what is available. By having fewer unwanted or junk foods around, you

will force your children to eat more fruits, vegetables, lean meats, whole grains, and dairy products. Keep the fruit in a bowl on the counter, not buried in the crisper section of your refrigerator.

Don't label foods as "good" or "bad."

Instead, tie the food items to the things your child is interested in, such as sports or doing well in school. Tell your child that lean protein such as turkey and calcium in dairy products gives them strength to play sports. Antioxidants in vegetables and fruits add luster to their skin and hair. And eating a healthy breakfast can help keep them focused in class.

Get kids cooking

Involve your children in choosing or preparing meals, and they will be more interested in eating what they have created. Take them to the grocery store and let them choose food items for you. If they are old enough, allow them to cut the vegetables and make a salad. Involving children in healthy activities like cutting foods and cooking is the key when it comes to changing bad eating habits.

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Dr. Emma George is medical graduate and nutritionist with over five years of experience in the field of medicine. She has a special interest in medicine, advancing medical techniques, and how the knowledge of medicine helps people improve their lives. Besides that, she is also a passionate writer and has published many health-related articles, books, and journals over the past years.

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