

Nutrition & Fitness for your Child: Ten Steps to Healthy Habits

1 Limit time spent in sedentary activities, including screen time such as TV, videos, electronic games, and computer play. Kids already spend a significant portion of their day sitting down during the school day.



2 Encourage your child to be involved in moderate to vigorous active play at least one hour a day. You will notice better behavior, too, when your child is allowed to burn off his or her energy.

3 Be an advocate for daily physical activity at school. Encourage school personnel to promote active play at recess and daily physical education classes, if possible. Kids who can release energy through activity perform better in the classroom.

4 Does your kitchen need an overhaul? Take a close look at pantry shelves, cupboards, the refrigerator and freezer. What are the first foods you see? Are you tempted by high calorie, low nutrition snack foods or are there plenty of nutrient-rich choices? Can you look around your kitchen and easily find the ingredients for four or five healthful meals? After you do this visual inventory, make a list of staple ingredients needed to stock a healthful kitchen.

5 Merchandise healthful food choices. What you see is what you will eat. Set out a big bowl of cut-up fruit or veggies, display whole grain finger sandwiches and low-fat yogurt in a visible place in the refrigerator, and stock the snack cupboard with whole-grain crackers, air-popped popcorn and pistachios.

6 Plan weekly menus. It may sound time consuming, but putting a little thought and planning into mealtime saves time and can result in big health and economic advantages.

7 Make better choices when eating out. Most of the major restaurant chains publish nutrition information about their menu items. Either ask for a nutrition brochure or access the information online. (In most cases, simply type in www.restaurantname.com and you will be directed to the restaurant's website).

8 Tempt hungry kids with healthful snacks. Kids often have extra large appetites after school, before bed or following sports practice. Be sure to set out nutritious "grab foods" such as cut-up veggies and fruit, whole corn tortilla wedges with bean dip and fresh salsa, or string cheese and whole-grain crackers.

9 Limit the amount of liquid calories available such as soda pop, fruit drinks and other sugar sweetened beverages. Encourage kids to drink unlimited water, 2-3 cups of nonfat or 1% milk, and no more than 4-8 ounces of 100% fruit juice/day as the beverages of choice.

10 Resist the temptation of making every activity an *eating* activity. Food is available virtually everywhere you go these days, whether it's a sporting event, movie or a trip to the gas station! Eat before you go or pack your own healthful snacks.

#1 Tip for Parents:
Kids are watching you. By role modeling positive nutrition and activity habits, you are sure to improve your family's health.

