9 Healthy Eating Tips for Families

Eating habits are learned. What your kids learn to eat now sets the stage for how they eat as adults. Show them how to make smarter choices so they'll build lifelong healthy habits.

1 Eat Together

Make your meals a family event as much as you can. Eating together helps your children view food and mealtimes as a positive experience.

2 Mealtime is Teaching Time

When dining out together, point to the healthier food choices on the menu, such as fruits and veggies and explain what makes them a better option. Be a healthy role model and order your own meal with one of those choices, too!

3 The Perfect Plate

Half of your child's plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables. The rest should include protein, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. Check out the MyPlate guide to help plan out your portions!

4 Skip the Kids' Menu

Kids' menus are often filled with the usual suspects – pizza, fries and burgers. Instead, scan the appetizer menu for kid-friendly options like lettuce wraps, hummus with veggies for dipping or grilled chicken skewers.

5 Sauce Smarts

Pasta is a common go-to meal for kids of all ages, but restaurant dinners are often loaded with high-fat sauces and sodium. Try ordering whole-wheat pasta and choose marinara sauce over cream or cheese sauces. Ask the wait staff to add veggies, too!

6 Fast Food Fixes

Sometimes fast food is unavoidable, but you can opt for healthier choices for your kids. Here are some options that you and your child can enjoy:

- Grilled chicken breast sandwich with tomato
- Single slice of veggie pizza
- Bean burrito with avocado
- Brown rice and veggie bowl

7 Be Adventurous

Try new foods together as a family. For your next meal out, explore different restaurant options that offer foods that may not necessarily be on your kids' go-to list. Healthy Asian stir-fry, Mediterranean pita sandwiches made with lean meat and grilled Mexican fish tacos are just a few ideas.

8 Sneaky Swaps

Some kids continually resist healthy foods. A few sneak tactics may be in order, like using Greek yogurt instead of sour cream or offering water with an orange slice instead of fruit juice. Work new foods into your child's diet slowly but consistently.

9 Keep Trying!

Keep offering your kids new foods, even if your child doesn't seem interested. Remember, with toddlers and preschoolers, it can take ten or more times to like a new food. Don't give up!

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