

Growing Healthy Kids

Did you know? Eating well during the early years is key for a healthy start to life. Many of us don't get all the nutrients needed to grow up healthy and strong. Eating a variety of healthy foods and staying active each day can make a difference. Here are some simple tips to help you grow healthy kids.

While You're Pregnant

You want the best for your baby. And one of the best things you can do as a pregnant mom is to eat healthy foods.

- Choose whole grain cereals and breads, plenty of fruits and vegetables for vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Enjoy beans and lean meats for protein and iron, and low-fat dairy foods for calcium.
- Keep active so you stay strong—and after delivery, take baby along!

While You're Breastfeeding

Give your baby the best nutrition—breastfeeding—for a healthy start. To meet your increased needs and those of your growing baby:

- Enjoy lean meats and beans, dark green and orange vegetables, and fruits of all colors
- Drink plenty of water and keep active to tone and reshape after giving birth.
- Eat calcium-rich dairy foods like low-fat milk and yogurt, and a variety of cereals and breads made with whole grain.

For Infants 0-12 months

Breastfeed your baby "on demand" during the early months. Begin to introduce new foods slowly, one at a time as recommended.

- Start with iron-fortified infant rice cereal mixed with breast milk at 6 months of age.
- Add in plain mashed cooked vegetables and fruits at 6 months.
- Feed plain strained meats and chicken, beans, tofu, yogurt and cottage cheese at about 7-8 months.
- Introduce small finger foods that babies can feed themselves—pieces of soft tortilla, cereal, soft cooked vegetables, finely diced fruits without peel at 8 to 10 months.
- Cheerios® cereal is appropriate for children who are able to eat solid foods. Always ensure that the child is seated and supervised while eating.
- Use a cup instead of a bottle.
- To better identify any possible food allergies, add foods one at a time a few days apart.
- Stretch, move and crawl with your baby to strengthen small muscles and tone yours. Stroller walks are great ways to see the world and stay fit.



For Toddlers 1-2 yrs

This is an active time as toddlers learn to walk and move more freely on their own.

- Feed whole cow's milk at 1 year until age 2—in a cup instead of a bottle.
- Offer a variety of healthy foods at each meal—lean meats, beans, plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy foods—in smaller pieces and portions than what other family members are eating.
- Offer two to three healthy snacks daily.
- Introduce new foods regularly and offer foods **again** that your child disliked—as their tastes change quickly.
- Avoid foods that may get stuck in the throat—hot dogs, nuts, popcorn, raw carrots and apples with skin.
- Skip extras such as juices, soft drinks, candies, fried foods and fatty meats that provide many calories yet few nutrients.
- Stay active everyday as a family—both inside and out.

Time it Right:

Plan snacks for your children halfway between mealtimes. If they eat too close to meals it may ruin their appetites.

For Children 3-5 years

Busy preschool years are filled with learning and growing as your child becomes more independent, and ready for school.

- Switch to nonfat skim or low-fat milk instead of whole milk to keep calories and fat in check.
- Set a good example. Offer and enjoy a variety of healthy foods at every meal—lean meats, beans, plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy foods—so your child eats like you and other family members.
- Make wise snack choices—fresh fruits, veggies and yogurt dip, tortillas with low-fat cheese and salsa, low-fat popcorn, veggies and hummus and ready-to-eat cereal with skim milk. Snacks are important for small growing bodies and help provide needed energy and nutrients.
- Provide at least 30 to 60 minutes of activity daily to keep children fit and at their right body weight. Have them run, climb, jump, dance, tumble, hike, hop, play tag or games with soft balls.
- Wear helmets when riding tricycles, bikes, scooters, skates or toys with wheels.

For more information, visit your local WIC clinic.