

Parenting for a Healthy Lifestyle

Helping your child grow, developing healthy eating habits and maintaining a healthy weight are important for life. Here are some tips to help you guide your children toward a healthy lifestyle.

Helpful Tips

The Golden Rule of Feeding:

Know the roles of parents and children during meal and snack times. Parents choose, prepare and serve foods—offering meals and snacks at regular times during the day. Children decide *if* they will eat, and *how much* they eat.

- Enjoy eating together as a family often—at least 5-6 times a week. Include children and teens as you plan, shop and prepare for family meals.
- Set a good example by choosing healthy foods and being physically active every day. Let children see you living a healthy lifestyle.
- Play games, activities and sports with your children and let them see you enjoying being active and fit.
- Have nutritious foods available at home all the time. Offer a variety of healthy foods each day and limit purchases of high calorie, low nutrient foods.
- Continue to offer new foods regularly—even if they are foods that a child has refused in the past. It often takes many attempts before children learn to like a new food.
- Expand your food and activity circle. Choose a new food to try each month or a new activity or sport to learn each season.
- Make small changes in behavior to meet family health goals. Small changes are more likely to become habits over time.
- Limit meals eaten away from home—especially fast foods.
- Remind family members to listen to their bodies—to eat and drink when they are hungry and thirsty—and to stop when they are full.
- Avoid using food as a reward or punishment. Use methods other than food for discipline.
- Learn about right size portions and serve them to family at meals and snack time.
- Reduce screen time and keep TVs out of bedrooms.
- Love and accept children and praise them for positive behaviors.
- Volunteer with your family. Stocking a food shelf, serving a meal or helping a neighbor is a good way for children to make a difference in the health of others.
- Plan active holiday and birthday celebrations for family and friends. Instead of gathering to eat, gather for a game or sport, followed by a healthy meal or snack.

For more information, visit your local WIC clinic.