

PARENT TIP SHEETS

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Healthy Nutrition:

- Healthy hydration
- Healthy breakfast
- Healthy snacks
- Low-fat dairy
- Alternatives to milk
- Fruit forward
- Convenience store foods
- Protein sources
- Vary your protein
- Shop by season
- Roasted veggies
- Flavor remix
- Celebrate healthily
- Shop healthy and save
- Health benefits of gardening

Healthy Habits:

- Involve the kids in the kitchen
- Screen Time
- Picky eating
- Coping with childhood stress
- Healthy family communication
- How to be an active role model
- Parent and caregiver self care
- Make the most of mealtime
- Healthy sleep habits
- Oral hygiene
- Move more

HEALTHY HYDRATION

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Our bodies are made up of approximately 70% water! Water has many important functions in the body, like helping regulate your body's temperature, aiding digestion of food and excretion of waste. Bodies lose water throughout the day through sweat, breath, and urine. *It's important to replace the water lost throughout the day, to prevent dehydration!*



IS MY CHILD DEHYDRATED?

Warning signs could be:

- Poor concentration
- Headaches
- Thirsty
- Cracked lips
- Dry mouth
- Constipation
- Lethargy
- Dark urine



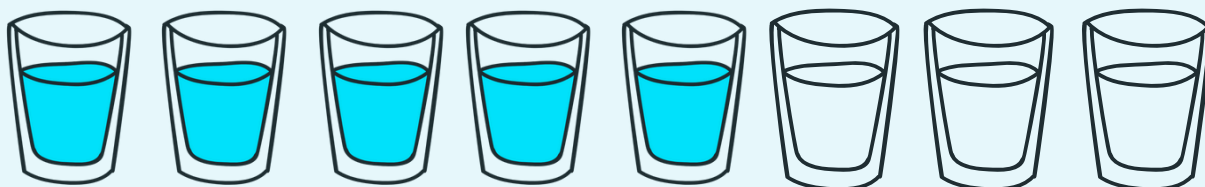
HELP KIDS STAY HYDRATED:

- Children under 8 years of age, 4-6 glasses/day min.
- Children older than 8 years of age, 6-8 glasses/day min.
- Extra fluids are needed if your child plays sports, is very active, on hot days, or if they feel unwell
- Pack their favorite water bottle for school / when going out
- Try carbonated seltzer water for the 'fizz' feel
- Offer hydrating fruits, like watermelon or peaches



Water is the best choice to keep kids hydrated throughout the day, limit drinks with added sugar! Try using this [water tracker](#) for a fun way to make sure you're staying hydrated!

WATER TRACKER



GOAL:
64OZ



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HEALTHY BREAKFAST

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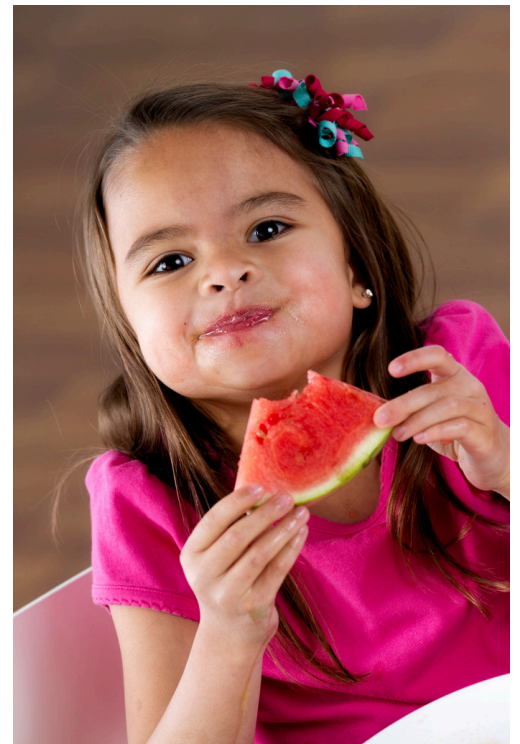


A healthy breakfast is a must for kids! There's a reason breakfast is called the most important meal of the day! Growing bodies and developing brains need regular, healthy meals - including breakfast!

FUELING THE FUTURE:

Kids who eat breakfast perform better in school, are more likely to participate in physical activities, and eat healthier overall. Kids who skip breakfast are more tired, less able to learn at school, and more likely to be overweight because they eat more calories later in the day.

- Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient statement when you shop.
- Give kids food they like. Mix a little bit of cereal they like with some berries or add a banana on top.
- Make healthy trade-offs by incorporating a balance of fruits, veggies, proteins, grains, and dairy into breakfast.
- Take growth and activity levels into account. As growing bodies need nourishment, having a breakfast that contains protein, fat, and carbs help children feel full and stay focused for longer.
- Prepping the night before by chopping fruit or nuts to mix in with yogurt creates easier mornings.
- Help your children make healthy choices while on the run by offering pieces of fruits, a bag of trail mix, muffin and nut spread, or yogurts.



Go beyond traditional breakfast foods. Just be sure to maintain a healthy balance. If your kids want to switch it p consider last night's leftovers for a sandwich! Some fun ideas include:

BANANA DOG

Peanut butter, banana, and raisins on a whole-grain bun

BREAKFAST TACO

Scrambled eggs, shredded cheese, on a tortilla topped with salsa

SANDWICHES

*Fruit and cream cheese sandwich
Grilled Cheese
Nut butter and Jelly*

COUNTRY COTTAGE CHEESE

Apple butter mixed with cottage cheese

BEYOND TRADITIONAL:

HEALTHY SNACKS

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Snacking is good when you feel hungry between meals. Choosing healthy snacks will help you and your family stay at a healthy weight. Healthy eating is an important way to support your child's healthy growth and development. Snacks can help them get the nutrition they need and prevent them from feeling overly hungry between meals. For snacking to be healthy kids need to eat the right kind of food at the right time!

NO TIME? NO PROBLEM:

Prepare for unplanned snacks: Sometimes, well-meaning grandparents, friends, and teachers may offer your child snacks like chips, candy, and cookies. Your child may feel hungry faster than usual after eating these types of foods. However, explaining your goals to them and asking for their support may help ease your snack load.

Snack ideas with little to no preparation time:

- Whole-grain crackers with apple slices
- Dried fruit or nut trail mix
- Low-fat string or sliced cheese with 10 to 15 grapes
- Low-sodium sliced turkey breast wrapped around cherry tomatoes
- Low-fat, low-sugar Greek style yogurt and a small pear
- Sliced cucumber and whole-grain crackers
- Natural lean jerky stick (such as beef, turkey, or chicken)
- DIY trail mix - dried fruit, nuts, dark chocolate chips, and popcorn
- Blend plain fat-free yogurt with 100% fruit juice and frozen peaches for an easy smoothie
- Single-serving low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Individually wrapped string cheese



* It is best to try to set a schedule at a young age!

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE SIZE:

Snacks shouldn't replace a meal, so look for ways to help your kids understand how much is enough. Store snack-size bags in the cupboard or fridge and use them to help control serving sizes.

PORTION SIZE:

FRUIT

- 1 Small banana
- 1 Medium apple
- ¼ Cup raisins
- 1 Cup whole strawberries
- ½ Cup orange juice
- ½ Cup canned fruit cocktail in juice (not syrup)

VEGETABLES

- 1 Cup cherry/grape tomatoes
- 2 Cups raw mixed veggies
- 12 Baby carrots with 2 tbsp. fat-free dressing
- 18 Small celery sticks
- 1 Cup raw cauliflower

GRAINS

- ½ Cup oat circles cereal
- 2 Graham cracker squares
- 3 Cups air-popped popcorn
- 4 Whole-wheat crackers
- 2 Unsalted brown rice cakes
- ½ Whole-wheat English muffin

DAIRY

- 1 Cup fat-free milk
- ½ Cu fat-free pudding
- ½ Cup fat-free frozen yogurt
- 1 Ounce low-fat cheddar cheese



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LOW FAT DAIRY

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The Dairy Group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soymilk. They provide calcium, vitamin D, potassium, protein, and other nutrients needed for good health throughout life. Choices should be low-fat or fat-free—to cut calories and saturated fat.

TIPS to EAT LOW FAT or FAT FREE DAIRY:

- Drink fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. If you drink whole milk, switch to lower fat versions. This cuts saturated fat and calories but doesn't reduce calcium or other essential nutrients.
- Boost potassium and vitamin D, and cut sodium! Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt more often than cheese. Milk and yogurt have more potassium and less sodium than most cheeses. Also, almost all milk and many yogurts are fortified with vitamin D.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk on cereal and oatmeal. Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt instead of higher fat toppings such as sour cream.
- Choose cheeses with less fat! Many cheeses are high in saturated fat. Look for "reduced-fat" or "low-fat" on the label.
- Regular cream cheese, cream, and butter are not part of the dairy food group. They are high in saturated fat and have little or no calcium.
- Switch ingredients! When recipes such as dips call for sour cream, substitute plain yogurt. Use fat-free evaporated milk instead of cream, and try low-fat or fat-free ricotta cheese as a substitute for cream cheese.
- Watch for added sugars! Flavored milk, fruit yogurts, frozen yogurt, and puddings can contain a lot of added sugars. Get your nutrients from plain dairy foods without added sugars.
- Make or order coffee with fat-free or low-fat milk instead of cream!
- If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk, drink smaller amounts of milk at a time, or try soymilk (soy beverage). Check the Nutrition Facts label to be sure your soymilk has about 300 mg of calcium. Calcium in some leafy greens is well absorbed.
- Dairy foods are especially important to build the growing bones of kids and teens. Eat or drink low-fat or fat-free dairy foods with meals and snacks—for everyone's benefit.



What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group? 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soy beverage; 1 1/2 ounces of natural cheese; or 2 ounces of processed cheese. **How much is needed?** Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups a day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2 1/2 cups, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.



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ALTERNATIVES TO MILK

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Milk and other dairy products are a top source of calcium for Americans and a critical mineral kids need to build strong bones and help muscles and nerves. According to MyPlate, children 2-3 years old need 2.5 cups from the dairy group per day. Calcium requirements increase as children get older, so from 9 years on, they need 3 cups from the dairy group per day.

— CAN'T OR WON'T DRINK MILK? —

Many parents feel anxious when their child won't – or can't – drink milk. If you're working on getting your child to accept milk, try these dairy equivalents:

- Blend 8 ounces of yogurt into a fruit smoothie (equal to 1 cup milk)
- Make mini-pizzas with whole-grain English muffins, tomato sauce, and ½ cup shredded cheese (equal to 1 cup milk)
- Serve ½ cup instant pudding made with reduced-fat milk as an occasional treat (equal to ½ cup milk)
- Offer ½ cup cottage cheese with fresh fruit (equal to ¼ cup milk)
- Milk can be disguised in your child's favorite foods, too. Try mixing it in oatmeal, cold cereal, cream-based and tomato soups, and homemade smoothies.

Just be sure to choose low-fat options such as 1% or non-fat milk. These deliver all the nutrition of 2% or whole milk with a fraction of the amount of saturated fat. That makes them healthier for kids' hearts.

— ALTERNATIVES TO DAIRY: —

Vegan lifestyles and food allergies are common reasons that some children do not consume dairy products. Soymilk provides protein and can be a source of calcium and vitamin D when fortified with these nutrients. Not all non-dairy alternative brands and styles are created equal. Parents should compare Nutrition Facts Labels and select beverages that provide calcium, protein and vitamin D and no added sugars. Parents should consult an allergist and registered dietitian nutritionist about which milk substitutes are best based on their child's needs.

— GET CREATIVE: —

It's still possible to meet calcium and vitamin D needs every day! There are many foods to choose from:

- Find cereals that are fortified with calcium (check Nutrition Label)
- Substitute canned salmon for tuna in sandwiches at lunch
- Blend kale with frozen fruit in a smoothie
- Serve dark leafy greens such as cooked collard greens or bok choy as a side dish or mixed in casseroles or soups at dinner
- Stir sliced figs and almonds into hot cereals



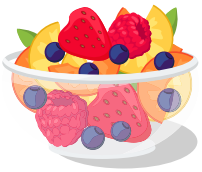
FRUIT FORWARD

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Use these simple shopping tips to help you choose the best options for your family, routine, and budget!

BUYER'S GUIDE:



FRESH

- Offers incredible taste and variety throughout the year.
- For best flavor and lowest cost, follow the seasons: eat berries in the summer, apples in fall, citrus in the winter.
- Apples and oranges have the best staying power. Keep them in the refrigerator and they'll stay fresh for weeks.
- For fruits that don't last long, freeze whatever you won't eat right away. Larger fruit, like bananas, can be cut into chunks first and then frozen.



FROZEN

- Provides easy, year-round options with minimal prep.
- Stock up on different varieties when they're on sale. Then just thaw in the fridge overnight, or pop frozen fruit directly into the blender for a smoothie.
- When the weather is hot, keep kids cool with a snack of frozen grapes or berries (making sure the pieces are small enough to avoid choking hazards), or freeze smoothies to make popsicles.



DRIED

- Perfect for convenient and healthy snacks on the go.
- Fruit bars and dried fruit can be ordered online when you want to stock up. When possible, try to avoid those with juices, purees, concentrates, or added sugars.
- Go beyond raisins! Expand your horizons with mango, strawberries, or fig.
- Shelf-stable and easily portable, making them one of the most convenient ways to consume fruit.
- Allergen-free options make safe school snacks.



CANNED

- Has amazing lasting power and requires no refrigeration.
- Canned fruit remains shelf stable for years, so consider buying extra when your favorite variety is on sale.
- To avoid added sugar, look for fruit packed in water or 100% juice rather than syrup.
- Try adding canned fruit to plain yogurt for a refreshing and filling breakfast.



CONVENIENCE STORE FOODS

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The whole point of a convenience store is to be quick and easy on-the-go. This typically includes highly processed options. However, there are some healthier choices that can be purchased. Some healthier options that can be available at gas stations, dollar stores and other local convenience stores include:

HEALTHY CHOICES:

- 
- **LEAN JERKY**- Lean jerky is high in protein and lower in fat content than other options. It also contains a number of vitamins and minerals, such as B-vitamins, zinc, and phosphorus. However, it is also high in sodium so be prepared to limit consumption.
 - **CHICKPEAS AND OTHER LEGUMES** - Chickpeas offer a great source of potassium. Beans are also a great, budget-friendly option. They provide excellent sources of fiber, folate, protein, and a number of other vitamins and minerals. Drain and rinse canned chickpeas and beans to decrease the sodium content.
 - **PEANUT BUTTER**- Peanut butter provides healthy fat that the body can utilize. It also offers a source of fiber, some vitamins and minerals. Try to stick with unsalted!
 - **BROTH**- Broth is a source of collagen, which helps skin elasticity, tissue development and joint support. Look for low-sodium!
 - **CHEESE STICKS**- Dairy products have an important place in a healthy diet. Cheese is lower in calories and high in protein to help maintain muscle mass. This is also a great source of calcium that counts towards your daily intake. Look to purchase skim or 1% cheese for lower fat content.
 - **TUNA**- Canned or packaged tuna contains protein and various B-vitamins, iron, selenium, and phosphorus. Tuna is a great source of omega-3 fatty acids that offer great benefit to the body. It is best to choose an option that is in water. Add the tuna to a salad, on top of toast, or wrapped up in lettuce.
 - **FRUITS & VEGETABLES**- Fruit in a cup, bananas, oranges, apples, carrots or low sodium canned veggies
 - **HARD BOILED EGGS**- You can find hard boiled eggs premade and packaged at local convenience stores. Eggs are a great source of protein and are nutrient dense.
 - **GREEK YOGURT**- Greek yogurt can have twice as much protein as regular yogurt. It contains minimal lactose that can limit side effects for those with lactose intolerance. Plain Greek yogurt can even be used as a healthy substitute for sour cream. Look at the nutrition panel of yogurts and watch for sugars. Some yogurts can even contain probiotic cultures that strengthen the intestinal microbiome.
 - **UNSALTED NUTS**- Eating nuts can positively impact heart health. They contain healthy fat and other nutrients. Check out unsalted options. Nuts are high in calories and consumption should be limited to the portion size. Pistachios take some work to get them out of the shell—thereby slowing down eating and reminding you to eat mindfully
 - **HUMMUS**- Hummus is made from garbanzo beans, filled with fiber and protein. It is often sold in packs with vegetables or pretzels for dipping. You can also use it as a spread!
 - **LOW FAT MILK OR UNSWEETENED ALMOND MILK**- contains a considerable amount of calcium. The fat found in plant-based beverages, like almond milk, contain unsaturated fat that is beneficial for the body. Look for a brand that fortifies their plant-based milk with calcium. If you cannot consume skim milk, the most comparable product based on nutrition will be unsweetened soy milk.
 - **QUICK ROLLED OATS** - use these 100% whole grains as an easy, fiber-packed choice
 - **SPICES** - plain spices—not the salty varieties of seasonings—are great choices to grab. Spices are packed with antioxidants. Cinnamon balance your blood sugar and can increase antioxidant activity in the blood!
 - **APPLE CIDER VINEGAR** – Good for your gut!
 - **TEA** - Chamomile variety can help ease you into a gentle evening rest!
 - **100% JUICE**- Some juices at the dollar store are of the "cocktail" variety, meaning they're packed with sugar, so look for 100% juice!



PROTEIN SOURCES

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Eating a variety of protein foods is necessary to help you and your child get the nutrients needed for proper health and growth. Protein supports growing muscles, which is especially important for child as they develop. The iron in protein foods helps carry oxygen within the blood. Certain protein foods, such as seafood and nuts, also contain healthy fats that support heart health.

DOES MY CHILD EAT ENOUGH PROTEIN?

Most children eat enough protein foods. However, children do not always eat the variety of protein sources they need. Offering fish or beans at some meals during the week is one way to add more variety to your family's meals.

PROTEIN SOURCES:



- Beans/Peas
- Beef
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Eggs
- Nuts
- Pork
- Nut/Seed Butters
- Shellfish
- Tofu
- Soy products
- Seafood

What if my family omits certain proteins from our diet?

Your child can get enough protein as long as he or she eats a variety of foods from the protein food group. Protein sources for vegetarians include eggs (for ovo-vegetarians), beans and peas, nut/seed butters, and soy products (such as tofu).

THE NUTRITION OF PROTEIN SOURCES VARY:

Proteins vary in **fat content and sodium levels**, so it important to consider this when picking your source and deciding how to prepare it. Choosing foods that are lower in fat sodium can help you lower your family's risk of high blood pressure and related diseases.

Here are a few healthier ways to select and prepare your proteins:

- Choose lean meats (chicken, turkey, fish) or low-fat cuts
- Remove skin, fat and bone from poultry before or after cooking
- Try grilling, broiling, roasting (to avoid adding extra fat)
- If using canned beans, look for cans labeled "reduced-sodium"
- Use the Nutrition Facts label on food packages to compare and choose lower sodium choices
- Fresh chicken, turkey, seafood, pork, and meat are usually lower in sodium than processed meat and poultry. Examples of processed meats and poultry are sausages, bologna, frankfurters (hot dogs), luncheon meats and loaves, pepperoni, and pre-marinated chicken
- When preparing at eating, limit or omit extra oils, butter and adding salt or salt heavy seasoning!

LOW
SODIUM

LOW
FAT



VARY YOUR PROTEIN FOODS

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Eating foods from all five MyPlate food groups gives your child the nutrition he or she needs to grow and be healthy. The five food groups are Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein Foods, and Dairy.

At child care, we serve a variety of protein foods to help your child get the nutrients he or she needs for health and growth. Protein supports growing muscles. The iron in protein foods helps carry oxygen within the blood. Certain protein foods, such as seafood and nuts, contain healthy fats that support heart health.

DOES MY CHILD EAT ENOUGH PROTEIN?

Most preschoolers eat enough protein foods. However, children do not always eat a variety of protein foods. Offering fish or beans at some meals during the week is one way to add more variety to your family's meals.

PROTEIN EXAMPLES TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- Beans / Peas
- Beef
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Eggs
- Nuts
- Pork
- Nut/Seed Butters
- Shellfish
- Tofu
- Soy products
- Seafood



QUESTIONS ABOUT PROTEIN FOODS:

What if my family doesn't eat certain foods in the Protein Foods Group?

Your child can get enough protein as long as he or she eats a variety of foods from the Protein Foods group. Protein sources for vegetarians include eggs (for ovo-vegetarians), beans and peas, nut/seed butters, and soy products (such as tofu). If you have concerns about what your child is eating, talk with your child's doctor. They may want to check to see if your child is getting enough iron from protein foods and other sources

HOW CAN I OFFER HEALTHIER CHOICES?

Use these ideas for healthier ways to select and prepare meats, chicken, and turkey:

- Choose lean or low-fat cuts of meat like round or sirloin. Select ground beef that is at least 92% lean. Trim fat from meat.
- Remove the skin from chicken or turkey before or after cooking. Remove any bones to prevent choking
- Try grilling, broiling, roasting, or baking — these cooking methods don't add extra fat. Some lean meats need slow, moist cooking to be tender — try a slow cooker.

ARE SOME PROTEIN FOODS HIGHER IN SODIUM (SALT) ?

The Nutrition Facts label on food packages lists the amount of sodium in a food. Compare the amount of sodium in similar types of foods, and choose ones that are lower in sodium. If using canned beans, look for cans labeled "reduced-sodium". Fresh chicken, turkey, seafood, pork, and meat are usually lower in sodium than processed meat and poultry. Examples of processed meats and poultry are sausages, bologna, frankfurters (hot dogs), luncheon meats and loaves, pepperoni, and pre-marinated chicken. Choosing foods that are lower in sodium can help you lower your family's risk of high blood pressure and related diseases.



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SHOP BY SEASON

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With the help of modern grocery stores, most produce is available to us year-round. Although it may not seem like it, shopping with the seasons can make a pretty big impact on your wallet, your health, and even the environment. *TIP: Purchase your favorite fruits and veggies nearing the end of their season to prepare and freeze them to carry them into the next season!*

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

Pay attention to the price of your favorite fruits and vegetables throughout the year. When in season, you'll likely be able to find certain produce in abundance and snag a great sale. When out of season, you might find yourself grumbling at the price. Why is that? If you've ever grown your own fruits and vegetables at home, you know that they all require a specific set of resources (amount of water, hours of sunlight, time to harvest, etc). When in season, foods can essentially grow on their own, without any excess resources making them time and labor-intensive. Purchasing out of season means putting a little extra money towards the support needed to help those fruits and vegetables thrive in less-than-ideal conditions.

A HEALTHIER WORLD AND YOU

Shopping with the seasons means eating with the seasons! It can be easy to add the same fruits and veggies to the grocery list each time. When you're shopping from a seasonal produce list, you'll be trying something new every few months! This also means you're eating foods that are packed with the highest amount of nutrients. Out-of-season foods come from places all around the world, where in-season foods can be grown locally. Take tomatoes, for example, in the off-season, they are picked green so they can be shipped to the grocer without rotting. When in season, they are picked at their peak and often from a local grower, requiring less travel. By shopping in season, you're lessening your environmental footprint. It takes more time and energy to grow foods in a less-than-ideal climate. This means growing is more labor-intensive and might require unsustainable practices. Shopping in season means your fruits and veggies can grow on their very own, taking the time that they need. With less distance to travel, this also means fewer emissions and less of an impact on our environment.

TIP: Check out this [Seasonal Grower's Guide](#) to find local growers and what's in season around your area!

SPRING

- Apricots
- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Chayote
- Collard Greens
- Green Beans
- Honeydew
- Lettuce
- Mango
- Oranges
- Peas
- Corn
- Pineapple
- Strawberries
- Spinach

SUMMER

- Apricots
- Avocados
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Strawberries
- Edamame
- Eggplant
- Watermelon
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Honeydew
- Nectarines
- Peaches
- Peppers
- Plums
- Raspberries
- Corn
- Tomatoes
- Figs
- Zucchini

FALL

- Acorn Squash
- Lettuce
- Swiss Chard
- Grapes
- Pomegranate
- Pumpkin
- Cauliflower
- Pears
- Cranberries
- Beets
- Apples
- Mushrooms
- Broccoli
- Sweet Potatoes
- Brussels Sprouts
- Butternut Squash
- Green Beans

WINTER

- Apples
- Bananas
- Cabbage
- Clementines
- Celery
- Brussel Sprouts
- Dates
- Collard Greens
- Grapefruit
- Mandarins
- Kale
- Sweet Potatoes
- Pears
- Winter Squash
- Onions
- Tangerines
- Turnips
- Potatoes
- Leeks
- Kiwifruit

ROASTED VEGGIES

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Roasting vegetables helps caramelize them which brings out a deep, sweet flavor and a golden-brown color. While roasting vegetables takes longer, the extra time is worth it!

Roasted veggies retain the heart-healthy fiber, vitamins and minerals needed for preventing disease!

BENEFITS OF ROASTING:

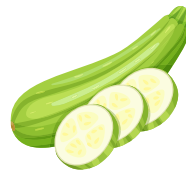
By switching to roasting, you not only eliminate added fat but also allow any fat in the food to drip away. The healthy-cooking methods described here best capture the flavor and retain the nutrients in foods without adding excessive amounts of fat or salt. Use them often to prepare your favorite dishes.

Varying your cooking methods and eating raw vegetables and fresh salads as well, dietitians say, may provide the broadest spectrum of nutritional benefits.

ROASTED VEGGIE COOK TIMES:

Eggplant

Roast for 30-35 min
Full of potassium and fiber



Asparagus

Roast for 10-15 min
High in Vitamin K & good for bone health

Carrots

Roast for 40-45 min
Lots of fiber, good for eye health

Summer Squash

Roast for 10-15 min
High in Vitamin K & good for bone health

Broccoli

Roast for 20-25 min
A great boost for your immune system



[Check out recipes and more info on roasted vegetables here!](#)

FLAVOR REMIX

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Eating familiar foods in new ways can keep mealtimes fun and exciting!

Getting creative with flavor combinations and cooking styles will help you build nutritious, balanced meals that your family will want to remix again and again. A re-mixed dish may become a new family favorite!

Enjoy exploring new foods and flavors!

REMIX YOUR GO-TO FOODS:

Jazz Up Your Vegetables:

- Try grilling vegetables outside or on a griddle for a unique smoky flavor
- Roast veggies in the oven and take a break from the stovetop
- Enjoy them raw and crunchy with homemade hummus

Recreate Your Canned Goods:

- Mix beans, olive oil and low-sodium seasonings for a delicious, healthy dip
- Make tuna the star of a salad or pasta dish – or mix it into your pasta salad
- Try canned tomatoes three ways; pasta sauce, soup or rice dish

Inspire Super Sandwiches:

- Build an at-home sandwich bar! Try tasty and silly flavor combinations
- Wake up your tastebuds with hot sauce, a tangy vinaigrette, or dried herbs
- Take a walk on the wild side with animal toast faces using fruit or veggies



TALK ABOUT YOUR FLAVOR REMIX!

Here are some discussion ideas to spark your exploration:

ASK QUESTIONS

- Do you like it?
- What does this taste like to you?
- What are the ingredients?
- Where do the ingredients come from?
- What can we learn about another place or culture by trying this food? What can we learn about our family or community through this food?

RATE THE FLAVOR

- 1 = I do not like
- 2 = I like it less than other foods
- 3 = I'm not sure
- 4 = I would eat it again
- 5 = New favorite

CELEBRATE HEALTHILY

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Eating healthy is important for all ages, even when celebrating!

Did you know that your child could easily consume a third of their daily calories in one classroom birthday celebration? Celebrations are great opportunities to promote healthy lifestyle, provide consistent messages about healthy eating, and offer extra physical activity.

HEALTHY CELEBRATION IDEAS:

Help your child choose options that are a balance of food groups, full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium:

- Serve up variety - Create a colorful buffet that includes a variety of foods from all food groups
- Cheers to good health - Serve water or sugar-free iced tea with fresh mint leaves, or seltzer water with a splash of 100% fruit juice or a wedge of lemon/lime.
- Suggest other gifts - A special crown or badge to wear all day or choosing a game/activity for the whole class to play
- Get moving & make the activity part of the fun - Laugh, mingle, dance, play music and play games.
- Rethink dessert - Offer a combination of fresh and dried fruit. Put out fixings for guests to make their own trail mix with a combination of nuts and dark chocolate chips.
- Offered food - Make sure fruits, veggies, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy products and water are on the celebratory menu.
- Reduce food waste - Manage leftovers by packing them for guests or using them in soups, salads, sandwiches, or omelets.

Find more alternative healthy celebration ideas, in and out of the classroom, at [Actionforhealthykids.org](https://www.actionforhealthykids.org) and try this [free printable](#)!



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SHOP HEALTHY & SAVE

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Shop healthy and save money by using weekly ads that offer discounts on healthy foods, like fruits and vegetables. You can also utilize store cards to get sale prices or buy store brands to save money on nutritious foods!

SHOP SMARTER, NOT HARDER :

- In-season fruits and vegetables usually cost less
- Shop at local farmers markets when possible
- If your favorite fruits and vegetables are not in season, buy the canned version without added sodium (salt)
- Buy frozen (without added fat) - just as healthy!
- Buy the biggest size of canned, frozen or packaged nutritious foods to save money
- When on sale, buy lean, fat-free dairy
- Look at the serving sizes / how many servings per package
- Check nutrients in each serving and choose products with lower numbers for calories, saturated and trans fats
- Discuss with children why foods high in sugar / fat / salt are not the best choices - they learn to make good choices from your guidance!



STORE BOUGHT vs BROUGHT LUNCH:

Buying lunch every day may seem like a small cost, but this can add up fast! Try being creative with packing your child's lunch (and having them help!) to save money!

BOUGHT LUNCH:

COMPARE COST:

Combo meal:	
Quarter pounder with cheese	\$5.19
Large Fries upcharge	\$0.70
Mini apple pies	\$1.29

TOTAL: \$7.18

BROUGHT LUNCH:

Turkey sandwich on whole-wheat bread with mustard, lettuce, & tomato	\$1.09
Reusable water bottle	FREE
Honeycrisp apple	\$0.65
Handful of blueberries	\$0.30

TOTAL: \$2.04

HEALTH BENEFITS OF GARDENING

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



From a young age, individuals learn about the world through observation, discovery, and interaction with their surroundings. If you have ever taken a walk through a park with a child, you may have noticed a change in their behavior. Spending time in nature benefits the health of both our minds and our bodies. A home, community, or school-garden provides the perfect setting to explore nature!

GROWING YOUR OWN IS GOOD FOR YOU!

- **Gardening promotes healthy eating:** Gardening can provide exposure to new and diverse foods. When children grow their own fruits and vegetables, they are more likely to try these foods. Creating a home garden is also a great way for families to spend time together and engage in outdoor physical activity.
- **Gardening improves mood and reduces stress:** As 'screen fatigue' increases, many families are looking for activities that do not involve technology. Tending a garden is the perfect way to take a brain break. In addition, gardening activities such as working with the soil and harvesting foods positively impact our body's release of mood-boosting chemicals in the brain.
- **Gardening provides opportunities for physical activity:** Adults and children should strive for 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Digging, planting, and harvesting in the garden are all forms of physical activity.
- **Gardening offers opportunities for experiential learning:** A [school-garden scavenger hunt](#) is a great way for teachers to [integrate nutrition into standards-based lessons](#) in a variety of subjects, including math and social studies.
- **Gardening fosters social-emotional skills:** Gardening teaches children basic life skills such as how to socially interact with others and develop skills such as sharing and taking turns. Working cooperatively allows children to develop a sense of self-confidence, teamwork, and responsibility as they create, plant, and tend to the garden. Gardening is also a good way for children to learn environmental responsibility by taking care of nature.



Consider the use of an [enabled garden design](#) that is accessible to and can be enjoyed by everyone!



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INVOLVE KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Involving children in meal planning, food preparation, and cooking activities introduces them to and allows them to experiment with new foods. *Kids are more likely to eat food they help prepare!* Encouraging involvement will help them build healthy eating habits they will carry through their lifetime.

WAYS KIDS CAN HELP OUT :

- Wipe tabletops
- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Break up cauliflower or broccoli heads
- Carry ingredients from one place to another
- Measure ingredients
- Knead and shape dough
- Mix, stir or pour ingredients
- Apply soft spreads
- Peel oranges or hard-boiled eggs
- Mash bananas, beans, or potatoes
- Cut items with kid-safe scissors
- Set the table
- Help garden / pick herbs



ALLOW CREATIVITY WITH FOOD!

Put out a few healthy food options and let your kids use these to create a new snack!

BASE

Small bagels
Whole grain or rye bread
Whole grain or graham crackers
Mini rice cakes or popcorn cakes
Small bits of whole-wheat pita bread

SPREADS

Low-fat refried beans
Fat-free or low-fat cream cheese
Fat-free or low-fat peanut butter
Jam with no added sugar
Hummus

TOPPINGS

Strawberries
Slices of apple or banana
Raisins or other dried fruit
Slices of cucumber or squash
Cherry tomatoes cut in 1/2

IDEAS TO BEGIN!

Remind children to wash hands before and after helping in the kitchen. Be patient with spills and mistakes. Keep in mind that the goal is to help kids learn about healthy eating through exposure.



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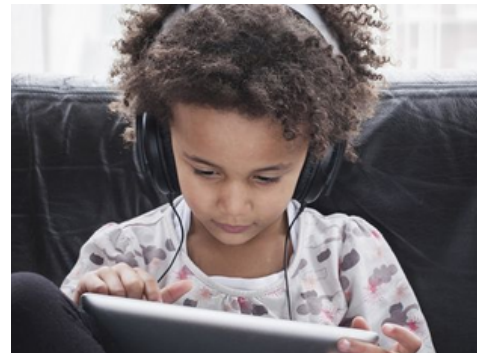
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SCREEN TIME

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



'Screen time' is any time spent in front of the TV, cell phone, hand-held video device, tablet, computer or internet. Don't let *too much* screen time get to be a habit for your family. Here are some more tips to help your children spend less time in front of screens and more time being *active*!



HOW TO REDUCE SCREEN TIME :

- Track your family's screen time using a chart - *put it in an easy to see spot in the home, as a reminder!*
- Aim for less than 2 hours of screen time a day
- Try to be physically active for 60 minutes each day
- Play outside
- Learn a physically active hobby
- Join a league or team sport
- Try to have family meals *at least 2 - 3 times a week - families that eat together tend to eat healthier!*
- Spend time asking questions or telling stories
- Turn off the TV during family meals - *when the TV is on, kids are also more likely to see ads that can influence them into choosing less nutritious foods!*



BE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL :

Studies show that children really do listen to their parents and follow their parent's actions. If you reduce your screen time more, your children will reduce theirs too!

NAME

SCREEN-TIME

James Potter



45 Minutes

Lilly Potter



1.5 Hours

Harry Potter



1 Hour

SCREEN TIME LOG



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PICKY EATING

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



A fear of new foods is normal, common, and temporary in children. Children will begin to assert independence in food preferences as they develop. Appetite and preferences can vary each day - and it's important to remember - that is *okay*!

REQUIRES PATIENCE & CREATIVITY

Start by introducing new foods early to promote acceptance. Introduce one new food at a time, pairing them along with familiar, accepted foods.

Make food fun by creating eye-catching plate arrangements. Using cookie cutters can aid in making colorful, fun shapes and themed meals!

Using new herbs & spices or pairing a combination of flavors such as sweet with salty or sour with bitter can be enticing. Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by mixing them into 'liked' dishes. Be respectful of 'eating quirks' to show consideration for a child's preferences.

Encourage trying everything, *often*, and let kids pick out what they want to try. Be consistent, patient, and don't give up!



SUBSTITUTION TIP!

Fresh Fruit	—————>	Dried, pureed
Cooked Veggies	—————>	Raw slices, or salad
Meat	—————>	Eggs, tofu, nut butter
Milk	—————>	Yogurt, soy, cheese



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COPING WITH CHILDHOOD STRESS

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Feeling overwhelmed? There's a good chance your child is too. Discover how both kids and caregivers can positively cope with stress.

Caregivers seem to juggle it all- work, family schedules, mealtimes, schoolwork, bills... the list goes on. This can cause major stress! What about your child? It may appear as though children do not stress, but kids today are worrying more than ever. Stress can affect anyone who feels overwhelmed. *Too much stress* can influence the way kids feel, act, and think. Most adults have developed skills to adapt to stressful situations, but for kids - even small changes in their routine can cause stress.

If you notice your child behaving "out of the norm":

- Set aside time with your child and express concerns
- Give them a safe space to share what they may be feeling and validate those feelings.
- Let your child know you support them.
- Kids may not always be looking for an answer, but just really need someone to listen!



If kids choose not to engage in conversation or respond with "I'm fine", how can caregivers continue to monitor and support their child?

- Reiterate your support and willingness to listen as needed.
- It may be beneficial to point out your reasons for feeling this way.
- Your child may respond differently to another family member or school counselor.



Stress is part of our lives whether we like it or not. Teaching kids to manage stress in healthy ways at a young age will only help them to succeed later in life. A supportive person to listen and simple coping skills can make a significant difference. Remember - your child is always watching and learning from you, so it is important that they are seeing you demonstrate healthy coping skills as well!

WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS:

- Changes in mood
- Increased irritability
- Anxiety
- Sleep disturbance
- Isolation
- Somatic complaints

QUICK CALMING STRATEGIES:

- Simply taking a break
- Going on a short walk
- Taking deep breaths
- Playing a game
- Practicing mindfulness techniques

TRY '5 SENSES':

- Focus on finding:
- 5 things they can see
 - 4 things they can feel
 - 3 things they can hear
 - 2 things they can smell
 - 1 thing they can taste

HEALTHY FAMILY COMMUNICATION

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Did you know that you can improve social-emotional health by having meaningful conversations with loved ones? Whether at home, over the phone or virtually, sharing stories across generations is a great way to increase resilience and positive emotions like happiness and empathy. If you have children in your life that you want to connect with but don't know where to start, try striking up a conversation that you can build on with shared experiences and interests. For example, you can ask a child what the hardest thing about being their age is, or what music is their favorite right now, and use their response as a starting point to listen, support, and share similarities from your life.



WAYS TO CONNECT:

Consider these communication strategies:

- Start a conversation when you are both available and not busy with tasks such as homework or chores. Make sure the environment is quiet and free of distractions, such as by putting phones away and turning off electronics. Good times to start a conversation might be in the car, on a walk, and while sharing a meal.
- Approach family conversations with an open mind. Plan to listen without judgment and speak honestly. If a child seems distracted or upset, pause the conversation and try again another time.
- Make yourself approachable so kids feel comfortable coming to talk to you about any topic. Be willing to pause what you are doing to listen to a child or teen who initiates a conversation with you.
- If kids are not super talkative, don't give up! Try sharing a story about yourself that relates to their interests!



FAMILY FRIENDLY QUESTIONS:

1. Growing up one of my favorite family traditions was _____. What is your favorite family tradition? Why?
2. Do you know the story of how _____ [relative, close friend] and I met?
3. Do you know where I was born and where I grew up?
4. The greatest thing I learned from my family was _____. What memorable lesson did you learn from your family?
5. What is your happiest memory? My happiest memory is _____.
6. When I was younger, the bravest thing I did was _____. What's the bravest thing you've ever done?

HOW TO BE AN ACTIVE ROLE MODEL

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Did you know that one of the best ways to encourage healthy choices in children is to model those choices as an adult? Parents, older siblings, teachers, and other role models can help kids and teens make healthy choices by simply engaging in healthy behaviors like eating nutritious foods and being physically active. In addition to making healthy choices themselves, there are many ways adults can be role models for positive behaviors like physical activity. Take the simple steps below to encourage youth physical activity while being a super role model!

TIPS TO BE AN ACTIVE ROLE MODEL:

Plan And Set Goals For Physical Activity:

Track physical activity with a chart, then reinforce progress with healthy rewards such as a special family outing or the opportunity to win a prize.

Demonstrate Physical Activity:

Demonstrate physical activity and behaviors that safely support an active lifestyle with and in front of others. As a parent or caregiver, this could mean doing yoga in your living room with kids or while kids play nearby. As an educator, this could mean being active with students at recess, leading classroom physical activity opportunities, or making the gym available for physical activity during lunch.

Encourage Physical Activity:

School staff and community leaders can encourage family physical activity by assigning active homework to students, hosting active events, utilizing joint use agreements to make physical activity facilities such as gyms and playgrounds available outside of school hours, and providing low-cost resources/classes to families.

Communicate Positively About Benefits of Physical Activity:

This includes improving sleep, increasing academic performance, preventing illness, and strengthening social connections. Keep your audience in mind and discuss how participating in physical activity can safely align with their interests.

Encourage Community Physical Activity:

Parents and family members can encourage physical activity for their children outside of the home by joining wellness committees, volunteering for active events like a Family Fitness Night or Fun Run, and asking how physical activity facilities such as gyms and playgrounds can safely be made available to the community outside of school hours.



PARENT & CAREGIVER SELF CARE

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



As a parent or caregiver, you may be juggling multiple roles while prioritizing your family's health and safety. *But don't forget your health matters too!* Prioritizing your own well-being can help you be a better caregiver for your children and family members.

SELF CARE TIPS for YOU :

Try these tips to relieve stress, boost physical and mental health, and help you continue supporting your family:

1. Take care of your body:

When you can, take time to exercise, eat fruits and vegetables, and maintain a healthy sleep routine. Remember - it's OK to take small steps!

2. Focus on what you can control:

When we are overwhelmed, it can be easy to get stuck in a cycle of worry and stress. Practice identifying what you can control like making a list or calling a friend to talk. Also practice accepting what you cannot control, such as the news or a child's school assignment.

3. Congratulate yourself for a job well done:

Remind yourself that everything you are doing to support loved ones is making a difference and it is OK not to "do it all." Breathing and living one day at a time is a huge accomplishment!

4. Give yourself some space:

Choose one place within your environment to call your own, such as a room, desk, or spot in your home. If you are working from home with other people, try using a sign or cue to indicate when you are available to interact.

5. Schedule a daily 'worry window':

If you are having anxious thoughts, try scheduling 15 minutes each day to focus on those thoughts or write them down. Outside of this scheduled time, practice focusing on the moment and reminding yourself to save your concerns for your next "worry window."



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MAKE THE MOST OF MEALTIME

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Mealtimes provide opportunities for all of us to nourish our bodies and make emotional connections with the people we love.

BENEFITS OF SHARING MEALS:

- Increases intake of healthy foods
- Promotes positive weight status
- Strengthens emotional bonds
- Improves communication skills
- Provides exposure to healthy role models
- Decreases the likelihood of experiencing mental health issues
- Lowers the risk of engaging in unhealthy behaviors



MAKE MEALS ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE:

- Plan meals in advance to avoid last-minute stress
- Schedule a specific time for meals so everyone can be there
- Turn off electronics during mealtimes



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Take turns asking each other questions!

Here are some prompts to spark your exploration:

- What was your rose (favorite thing) and thorn (least favorite thing) about today?
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be?
- What is your favorite book / song right now? Why?
- What is something new you would like to learn?
- If you had the opportunity to change the world, what would you do?

HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Sleep hygiene is the collection of habits and behaviors that promote good sleep, and healthy sleep hygiene is vital for children. Proper sleep is essential to a child's development, physical and cognitive health, and academic performance. A lack of sleep negatively affects mood, concentration, the ability to recall information, and learning. Behavioral changes and adjustments to their sleeping environment can help!



TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP :

- Develop a routine - 20 minutes of wind downtime
- Use the bed only for sleeping - avoids confusing the brain
- Try sound machines and black-out curtains
- Avoid screen time for one hour before bed
- Create a sleep schedule to help regulate their natural clock
- Play relaxing music or read to them before bed
- Use a stuffed animal to associate with sleep
- Allow them to fall asleep in other places than their bed
- Do less stimulating activities 20 minutes before bed - brush teeth, put on pj's, or take a warm bath
- Dim the lights to create a calming atmosphere
- Write in a journal together to discuss concerns or joys
- Try sugar-free snacks after dinner to avoid late-night wake-ups
- Keep track of their sleep schedule to bring to your doctor if you notice excessive snoring, frequent night-walking, behavioral problems while at school, or daytime sleepiness



Get adequate sleep too! When you're fatigued, it can make it harder to keep up with routines and support healthy sleep habits in kids! Here is a [Sleep Diary](#) to help your family stay on track!

AGE GROUP:

RECOMMENDED HOURS OF SLEEP PER DAY:

Infant (4-12 Months)		12-16 Hours
Toddler (1-2 Years)		11-14 Hours
Preschool (3-5 Years)		10-13 Hours
School Age (6-12 Years)		9-12 Hours
Teen (13-18 Years)		8-10 Hours
Adult (19-60 Years)		7 or more hours

SLEEPING CHART:

ORAL HYGIENE

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Proper tooth brushing, flossing, and choosing the right foods are all part of keeping teeth and bodies healthy! Strong, healthy teeth help us chew nutritious foods. Encouraging proper brushing, flossing, and a mouth-healthy diet will help your child establish a proper oral hygiene routine that will benefit them for their whole life!

A SMILE AS BRIGHT AS YOUR FUTURE:

- **Brush Twice a Day** – the most important habit for your child's teeth is making sure that they brush them regularly and properly. Your child should brush their teeth twice a day for two minutes, using back and forth and up and down motions. Don't forget to encourage them to brush their tongue and gums to eliminate bacteria that can linger
- **Floss Once a Day** - It's best to floss before bedtime so your child can remove any food particles that may have gotten caught in their teeth. If your child finds using traditional floss difficult, there are lots of fun tools like floss picks that can make it easier
- **Get Regular Cleanings** - Your child should see their dentist every 6 months for a routine cleaning and checkup. Regular cleanings will help remove any plaque buildup that can lead to problems like cavities.



WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR:

- **Avoid Sticky, Starchy, Sugary Foods** - When sugar gets on the teeth, it serves as a food source for bacteria. The bacteria convert the sugar into acids, which then leads to tooth decay and cavities. Sticky, sugar candies are notoriously bad for the teeth since they stubbornly stay on the teeth after eating. The longer sugar remains on the surface of the teeth, the more bacteria can grow. Starchy snacks like potato chips and crackers that are made from refined carbohydrates get broken down into simple sugars when chewed. As they soften in the mouth, they can easily stick into the crevices of your child's teeth, providing food for bacteria
- **Skip Fruit Juice and Soda** - Fruit juices seem like a healthier alternative to soda, but they can still be harmful to your child's teeth. Most fruit juices are loaded with added sugar, often just as much as soda. This sugar will coat your child's teeth and provide a breeding ground for harmful bacteria. Additionally, fruit loses a lot of its nutritional factors when it's turned into juice, so your child is missing out on the benefits of fresh fruit. Soda is even worse than fruit juice because, in addition to sugar, it is also highly acidic due to the citric and phosphoric acids used to provide carbonation. Highly acidic things like soda can wear down the enamel on the teeth, which can lead to cavities and tooth decay. encourage your child to drink water whenever possible



Some oral hygiene must-haves include a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, and a mouthwash!



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MOVE MORE

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Physical activity is important for children and adults, so being active as a family can benefit everyone! Fostering healthy behaviors and staying active at home is vital for children's development. Children need at least 60 minutes per day!

TOGETHER, WE CAN!

Plan activities the whole family can do together to help build resilience and the ability to manage stressors, prevent disease and boost the immune system, reinforce lessons learned at school, and create a 360-degree healthy environment.

Moving more and getting active as a family tips and ideas:

- Start small - walk to your friend's house
- Focus on fun - playing in the park, ice skating, or soccer
- Ride bikes after dinner
- [Do a nature scavenger hunt](#)
- Park further away at the store
- Walk your kids to school or walk to work
- [Use common household items for fitness fun and games](#)
- Choose fitness video games such as Just Dance
- Include other families - go bowling or an obstacle course
- Rainy Day Plans - indoor fort building or walking the mall
- Turn off the T.V. after two (2) hours
- [Practice yoga techniques and poses](#)
- Make it a treat - Go to the park, lake or beach as a reward
- Use what you have - Jog, jump rope, play tag, or dance
- [Have active screen time - using these fun, physical activities](#)



TRY SENSORY PLAY:

"Sensory play is a simple and exciting way for children to explore their different senses, movement, balance, and more in an unstructured setting. Children naturally explore textures, tastes, sounds, and smells through hands-on learning, which helps to build cognitive skills. By experimenting with different materials and manipulatives, children can practice observation skills and predict and draw conclusions about the natural and physical world."

MATERIALS:

- Uncooked rice
- Beans
- Cotton balls
- Feathers
- Shaving cream
- Marbles
- Dried pasta
- Hair gel

EXTRAS:

- Small toys
- Shovels
- Mini cars
- Small bowls
- Legos
- Dolls
- Children utensils
- Hand rake