

Parent Handout #2: Nutrition Recommendations

To help your child reach a more healthy weight, here are a few nutrition/dietary recommendations from the American Medical Association (2007):

1. **Have your child eat breakfast every day.**

Eating a healthy breakfast everyday gives your child the energy they need to face the day. Eating a healthy breakfast raises concentration and energy level. It also helps to lower overeating later in the day.

2. **Limit the number of meals eaten outside the home at restaurants or fast food places.**

Foods that are eaten outside of the home are usually higher fat and have less fiber than foods that are eaten in the home. These foods make it harder for your family to live healthy.

3. **Have family meals at least 5-6 times per week.**

Children whose families eat together are more likely to get all their needed vitamins and minerals. They are also less likely to snack on unhealthy foods. During a family meal, children are learning from their parents what is healthy to eat. They are also likely to slow down their eating and feel when they are full.

4. **Let your child have some control over his or her meals and avoid being too strict when it comes to food choices.**

Even though you should still be helping your child to make healthy food choices, allow your child to make some decisions about their food choices. An example would be to let them choose between two healthy items. Avoid having foods your child should not eat in the home.

5. **Limit your child's food to the right portion sizes for his/her age.**

Remember that your child should not be eating the same amounts of food as an adult. Instead of having food on the table and allowing seconds, serve food from the kitchen and give a right amount. Seconds should be limited to fruits and vegetables.

6. **Avoid sweetened beverages such as juice and soda pop.**

Sweetened drinks give your child calories and sugar that are not needed. Kids should be drinking water instead. Low fat milk is also a healthy choice, but should not replace water when your child is thirsty.

How do I get my child to eat healthier?

- Don't give up! Try making healthy foods in different ways. Your child might not want to try carrots and celery, but might eat them if they were shaped in a happy face. Also, canned spinach might not be something your child will eat, but spinach mixed with lettuce might be.
- Be a role model. Your child watches the choices you are making and your eating habits. Be sure that you are making healthy choices and changes along with your child.
- Let them help. Let your kids help in everything from grocery shopping to making the meal. When your children feel that they were a part of the meal, they may be more willing to try something new.
- Make it easy. Kids like to eat what is easy. If you give them healthy snacks that are easy for them to access, then they may not even think about the potato chips they are missing.

The Goal: Try to eat more fruit and vegetables and less high fat, high calorie, and high sugar foods. Make this change as a whole family in order to help your child live healthier.

REMEMBER: Your Follow-up Visit next month. See you then!