



Healthy Eating? Small Changes Help!

Times have changed, and so have eating habits. Today's average American child eats more calories overall, fewer vegetables and fruits, and snacks about 3 times a day. Fast food and packaged food is everywhere and full of salt, fat, and sugar.

What's a family to do? Make changes, right? It feels overwhelming to set goals like "no more junk food!" or "our family is only going to eat healthy food every day!" Instead, think about making small changes that result in healthier eating habits.

Think About It – Talk About It

- Take an honest look at what your family eats now during an average week. Are there more cookies being eaten than you realize? Is there a lot of snacking during TV time? How often are you eating fast food?
- Talk with your child about healthy foods that are okay to eat each day (Everyday foods) and foods to only have occasionally (Special Treat foods). Make a list together of favorite Everyday foods and a list of some new Everyday foods to try.

Tips To Make It Easier

- Look for little ways to add more fruit and vegetables to your family's diet: slice half a banana on cereal or add a diced tomato to pizza.
- Have your child choose a fruit or vegetable to add to the grocery list.
- Try a different snack to change things up – serve a scrambled egg on a slice of whole wheat toast.
- Try to *eat* calories rather than *drink* them. Offer orange slices or an apple instead of fruit juice. It's more satisfying and has more fiber.
- Make an effort to eat at home more. Food prepared at home tends to have less of the fat, sugar, and salt found in so many restaurant dishes.
- Consider having clear guidelines about treats so you don't have to decide yes or no again and again. For example, children get one sweet treat each day.

Be patient and recognize the value of small changes – they add up!

Eat Healthy ♦ Be Active ♦ Build a Bright Future

For more ideas and resources to develop children's social-emotional skills and healthy habits visit AcornDreams.com, a service of Wingspan, LLC