

Simple and sensible ways to improve your young child's eating habits

Obesity is a "growing" problem among children in the United States. Establishing good eating practices from the start—even before your child reaches 5 years of age—can help prevent excess weight gain and sets the stage for healthy eating later in life.

How much is too much?

Children's stomachs are about the size of their fist and grow in size with age, just as their fists grow. Think about this when deciding how much food to offer. Either let the child serve himself or start with a portion 1/3 to 1/2 of what you would eat.



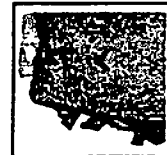
Helping your child eat better foods

☞ Most children go through "picky" phases. This is normal. Continue with your job of offering healthy foods and let them do their job of learning to like new foods.

○ Allow your child to explore new foods by looking, smelling, licking, and chewing the food, and sometimes even by spitting it out. One day he (or she) will finally decide the food is OK and swallow it! These actions are signs that he is interested in new foods. Discouraging him may make him less willing to try new things.

☞ Serve new foods when your child is a little hungry.

○ Serve milk at meals and limit juice intake to 4 to 6 ounces a day (one juice box). Sodas, juice drinks, teas, and other sweetened fluids are best for "only once in a while."



Parenting to support your child's growth and development

○ Eating with your child is a time for quality interaction. Talk about growing, being strong and healthy, and how that connects with eating and physical activity.

○ Keep it brief: Meals should only be about 15 minutes. A child's attention span is short for everything—including meals.

☞ Keep distractions to a minimum during eating.

☞ For children, negative attention is better than no attention. Try to notice and praise positive behaviors (such as eating) and ignore the frustrating ones.

☞ **Make a routine for eating and follow it as many days as you can. Involve your child in eating preparations as often as possible. He just might enjoy it—and may even offer to help clean up afterward!**

CPR—Food safety links

Contemporary Pediatrics Resources

This year's *Salmonella* serotype Saintpaul outbreak has given attention to the fact that fresh produce is not immune to carrying dangerous foodborne illnesses. According to a 2006 study by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, produce is the second-highest food group, behind only seafood, for being linked to outbreaks with identified causes. Young children, as well as pregnant women and their fetuses, are at particular risk. Below are Web sites detailing the latest foodborne illness information for practitioners, and common safety tips for choosing, handling, storing, and preparing produce for parents and patients.

For practitioners:

Food Protection Plan (FDA):
www.fda.gov/foodprotection/
Updates on the FDA's food regulatory activities.

Food Safety Office (CDC):
www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/
Reports of the CDC's outbreak investigations and other resources.

FoodNet (CDC):
www.cdc.gov/FoodNet/
Web site with data related to food disease monitoring.

Diagnosis and Management of Foodborne Illnesses: A Primer for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals-2nd Edition (CDC):
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5304a1.htm
The CDC's teaching tool to update health care professionals about foodborne illness.

Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA):
www.fsis.usda.gov
Web site of agency responsible for meat, poultry, and egg product safety.

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NIH):
<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/bacteria/index.htm>
NIH information page on foodborne illnesses.

Food safety (WHO):
www.who.int/foodsafety/en/
From the World Health Organization.

Center for Science in the Public Interest:
www.cspinet.org
An advocacy group for better foods.

Food Safety Information Center (USDA):
<http://foodsafety.nal.usda.gov>
From the Department of Agriculture.

For parents:

Fightbac.org (Partnership for Food Safety Information):
www.fightbac.org
Web site that educates consumers about safe food handling.

Food Safety.gov:
www.foodsafety.gov
Portal for government food safety information.

Common Food Safety Questions (NIH):
www.fsis.usda.gov/help/FAQs_Food_Safety/index.asp
Answers both general and specialized food safety questions.

Keep Your Food Safe (FDA):
www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/foodsfe.html
FDA information page on buying, preparing, and storing food safety.

Consumer Advice and Publications on Food Safety, Nutrition, and Cosmetics (FDA):
<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/advice.html>
A compilation of various food illness prevention topics for consumers.

Safe Food Handling Fact Sheet (USDA):
www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Safe_Food_Handling_Fact_Sheets/
USDA list of advice on handling foods safely.

Home Alone? After School Snacks and Food Safety Quiz (USDA):
www.fsis.usda.gov/News_Events/NR_090704_01/
Quiz on food safety for parents to take with their kids.

Teaching Kids About Food Safety:
<http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC3607.htm>
From Clemson University.

For patients:

Food Safety at Home, School and When Eating Out (USDA):
www.foodsafety.gov/~dms/cbook.html
An online food safety activity coloring book.

Food Safety Education for Kids and Teens (USDA):
www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/For_Kids_&_Teens/Index.asp
USDA games and activity books on food safety.

Food Safety for Your Family (Nemours Foundation):
http://kidshealth.org/parent/first_aid_safe/home/food_safety.html
Overview of food safety prevention tips for the whole family.

Food Safety Quiz for Kids (FDA):
www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/kids/html/wash_hands.htm
Questions on food safety basics for children.

Food Safety for Teens (Nemours Foundation):
http://kidshealth.org/teen/nutrition/general/food_safety.html
Overview on food safety meant for teenagers.

Healthy Youth: Food Safety:
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/foodsafety/index.htm
Data on food safety in schools.

Thermometer (USDA):
www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Thermometer_for_Kids/index.asp
A cartoon thermometer mascot for not undercooking foods.



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Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet is a heart-healthy eating plan combining elements of Mediterranean-style cooking. Here's how to adopt the Mediterranean diet.

If you're looking for a heart-healthy eating plan, the Mediterranean diet might be right for you. The Mediterranean diet incorporates the basics of healthy eating — plus a splash of flavorful olive oil and perhaps a glass of red wine — among other components characterizing the traditional cooking style of countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Most healthy diets include fruits, vegetables, fish and whole grains, and limit unhealthy fats. While these parts of a healthy diet remain tried-and-true, subtle variations or differences in proportions of certain foods may make a difference in your risk of heart disease.

Benefits of the Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet is thought to reduce your risk of heart disease. In fact, a 2007 study conducted in the United States found that both men and women who consumed a Mediterranean diet lowered their risk of death from both heart disease and cancer.

Key components of the Mediterranean diet include:

- Getting plenty of exercise and eating your meals with family and friends
- Eating a generous amount of fruits and vegetables
- Consuming healthy fats such as olive oil and canola oil
- Using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods
- Eating small portions of nuts
- Consuming very little red meat
- Eating fish or shellfish at least twice a week

Fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains

The Mediterranean diet traditionally includes fruits, vegetables, pasta and rice. For example, residents of Greece eat very little red meat and average nine servings a day of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables. The Mediterranean diet has been associated with a lower level of oxidized low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol — the "bad" cholesterol that's more likely to build up deposits in your arteries.

Nuts are another part of a healthy Mediterranean diet. Nuts are high in fat (approximately 80 percent of their calories come from fat), but tree nuts, including walnuts, pecans, almonds and hazel nuts, are low in saturated fat. Nuts are high in calories, so they should not be eaten in large



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amounts — generally no more than a handful a day. For the best nutrition, avoid honey-roasted or heavily salted nuts.

Grains in the Mediterranean region are typically whole grain and usually contain very few unhealthy trans fats, and bread is an important part of the diet there. However, throughout the Mediterranean region, bread is eaten without butter or margarines, which contain saturated or trans fats.

Healthy fats

The focus of the Mediterranean diet isn't to limit total fat consumption, but to make wise choices about the types of fat you eat.

The Mediterranean diet is similar to the American Heart Association's Step I diet, but it contains less cholesterol and has more fats. However, the fats are healthy — including monounsaturated fats, such as olive oil, and polyunsaturated fats, which contain the beneficial linolenic acid (a type of omega-3 fatty acid). These fat sources include canola oil and nuts, particularly walnuts. Fish — another source of omega-3 fatty acids — is eaten on a regular basis in the Mediterranean diet. Omega-3 fatty acids lower triglycerides and may improve the health of your blood vessels. The Mediterranean diet discourages saturated fats and hydrogenated oils (trans-fatty acids), both of which contribute to heart disease.