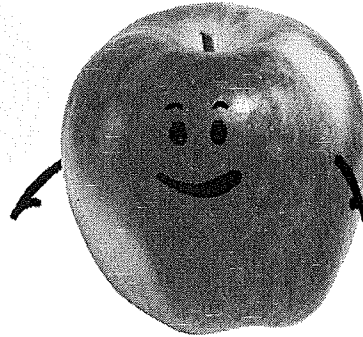


Positive Mealtimes

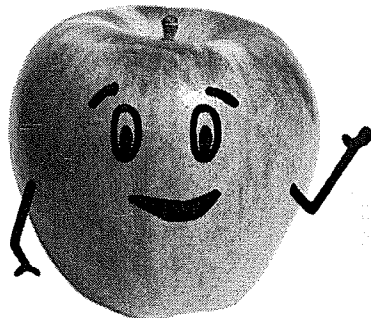
Promote happy, healthy eating with children

Young children are learning
how to eat and what they like
—and they need adult help.



It is normal for children to...	It is common for adults to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be picky eaters.• easily eat one thing one day and refuse it the next.• be unsure about trying certain foods.• be messy eaters.• dislike many vegetables.• at times eat a lot, other times, not very much.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourage children to finish all their food.• remind children they liked a food yesterday.• pressure children to try a new food.• force children to be less messy.• praise children for eating their vegetables.• insist children eat more or eat less.

What you say
does matter.

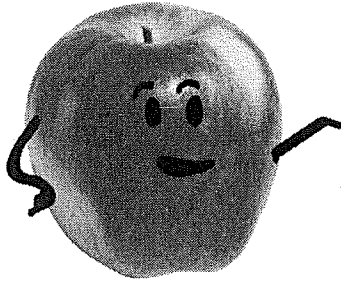


Find out how you can
help. It might be different
than you think...

When you eat with children, do you try to get them to eat...

- a certain amount of food? (e.g. "You need to eat at least three bites of broccoli.")
- in a certain order? (e.g. "Eat your vegetables before you get dessert.")
- certain types of food? (e.g. "You've only eaten rice and carrots, you need to eat some chicken.")

If yes, this is pressure for you and your child.



Take the pressure off—and support healthy eating in the long run.

What children want	How adults can help
Children want routine, sit-down meals and snacks.	Offer 3 meals and 2-3 snacks daily with water in between. This structure allows children to develop trust that they have regular opportunities to satisfy hunger.
Children want a pleasant mealtime.	Focus table talk on an event from their day instead of focusing on how much food a child is or isn't eating.
Children want to eat like you do.	Teach by example. Model good eating habits. In time, even months or years, children will learn to eat the foods their parents like.
Children want to feel independent.	Help children get served or let them serve themselves, then remain neutral. Avoid reminding, insisting, encouraging, suggesting, or praising children's food choices.
Children want to eat well.	Let children eat or not eat what is offered. Help them succeed by offering a food at each meal that they are comfortable with, such as milk, bread or rice. This gives them confidence that there will be something to satisfy their hunger as they're learning to enjoy new foods.

What you **SAY** matters.

✓	Does a child say...?	Consider saying...
	"Why do I have to come to the table?" (The child is too busy with an activity to come to the table.)	"I see you are busy with _____. In two minutes we are all going to the table to have dinner/lunch together."
	"I'm not hungry." (It is right before a snack or meal begins.)	"You don't have to eat, but start the meal by sitting with us."
	"Yuck, I don't like it." Or "I won't eat it."	"If you don't like it, just say 'No, thanks'. There are other foods on the table. You can eat some of those if you want."
	"I want to eat peanut butter on my bread for dinner instead!"	"We're not having that today. You don't have to eat anything if you don't want to. Come to the table and see what we are having."
	"I want more pasta." (The child hasn't touched their vegetables or chicken.)	"OK." (Allow your child to eat as much or as little as they like of each food.)
	"I only want dessert today." (There is dessert planned with dinner.)	"OK." (Unlike other foods at meals, no seconds on dessert.)
	The child doesn't say anything but is messy and disruptive with their food on purpose.	"That's not what we do with food. If you don't want to eat, I can take your plate away."
	"I'm done." (Other people are still eating.)	"OK." (Allow children to leave when they say they have had enough to eat. Young children can play quietly in the same room. As children get older, they will stay longer at the table.)
	"I'm not hungry." (It is at the end of the snack or meal and your child hasn't eaten anything.)	"OK. This is your last chance to eat before our next meal/snack."
	"I'm hungry." (It is before or after a meal or snack.)	"We're not eating right now. Do you want some water or do you want to wait until _____ (snacktime, breakfast, lunch, dinner)?"

Take ACTION!

Pick one of the situations you want to focus on and make a plan.

EXAMPLE

My child says:

I'm hungry. (and it's 15 minutes before we sit down to eat dinner)

I will say:

We're eating dinner in 15 minutes. Do you want some water or do you want to wait until dinner?

MY PLAN

My child says:

I will say:

It is your job as the parent to...

- choose what foods to serve at each meal.
- decide when meals and snacks are served.
- decide where each meal and snack is served.

Creating new habits and routines can be difficult at first. In time, providing scheduled sit-down meals and snacks (3 meals and 2-3 snacks each day with water in between) and avoiding pressure will support more positive mealtimes and a healthy relationship with food.



For more help with feeding children and picky eating, visit EllynSatterInstitute.org.
If you have more nutrition questions, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a dietitian.

Sharing Food, Creating Fun

Sharing food together is a great way to connect with your family. Being busy and not having much time can make this hard to do.



"When we eat together it gives us time to share how our day went and it makes us closer."

Nicole, 17 years old

Children who eat a meal or a snack with other family members at least once a day:



- Develop a sense of belonging, feel more secure and stable
 - Have an easier time talking with their parents
 - Have fewer behaviour problems
 - Do better at school
 - Have higher self esteem
 - Learn more words (have a better vocabulary)
- Try and enjoy a greater variety of foods
 - Eat more fruits and vegetables and less fried foods
 - Are less likely to smoke, use drugs, drink alcohol, be depressed or have disordered eating

Parents who eat with their families:

- Eat healthier
- Save money
- Strengthen family ties
- Role model healthy eating for their children
- Can share family values, traditions and culture
- Can connect with their children and find out what's going on in their lives



Raising a Healthy Eater

- Parents decide what, when and where to eat
- Children decide how much and if they will eat

Tips for Sharing Fun Family Meals



- Make the same meal for everyone
 - Plan a weekly menu with the family and put it on the fridge; have each family member choose one meal or snack they would like to have each week
 - Use your weekly menu to make a shopping list
 - Let children help with the grocery shopping and cooking, not just the clean up
 - Keep meals simple – when pressed for time, make sandwiches, reheat leftovers, buy bagged salads or pre-chopped veggies or roasted chicken
- Turn off the TV, computer and cell phones
 - Take phone calls later
 - Schedule family meals into your calendars
 - Allow children to eat slowly or fast, eat just one or many different foods. Let them have more of any food.
 - Share your table manners
 - Keep conversation pleasant and make sure everyone gets to speak and be heard
 - Keep mealtimes fun



Keep a jar filled with things to talk about at the table. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- The best part of your day
- Ideas for family activities
- The 3 favourite things about your best friend
- If you had one wish, what would it be?
- Share something you did that made someone else feel good
- Tell jokes or share a funny story

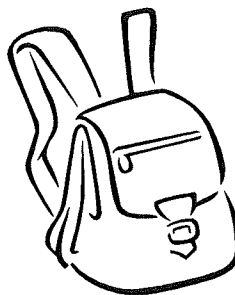
For more information:

www.bettertogetherbc.ca

Contact Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC; call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian or go to www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian to email your question. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>
or email pheem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **BB.200.E28**
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www.vch.ca



Lunches to Go

Bringing variety & fun to packed lunches!

Lunchbox Tips:

- ✓ Keep it simple and easy to eat but healthy and tasty.
- ✓ Try to include foods from each of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives and Meat and Alternatives).
- ✓ Kids love to eat what they create. Let your child choose their lunch from a list of healthy choices.
- ✓ Cut up extra veggies when making dinner to use in lunches the next day or by making extra at meals to use as re-runs for lunches the following day.
- ✓ On a cold day, pack a small thermos of soup, pasta, or other hot item.



Versatile Veggies & Fast Fresh Fruits

Choose food grown or produced in BC whenever you can. Offer a variety of fresh or frozen choices.

- Cauliflower, broccoli
- Baby corn, fresh sweet radishes
- Pepper strips (yellow, green, red, orange)
- Turnip or zucchini sticks
- Peas in a pod or snow pea pods
- Cherry tomatoes, cucumber
- Melon balls, cherries, berries
- Kiwi, pears, peaches
- Apples, plums, apricots
- Papaya, mango



Wrap or Pita Pocket Combos

Mix with mayonnaise, salsa, or other sauces/spreads:

- Hard cooked egg, chopped cucumber and green onion
- Chicken chunks and sliced seedless grapes
- Turkey or marinated tofu chunks, grated carrot and shredded lettuce
- Canned or cooked fish and red and green pepper slices
- Ricotta cheese and fruit
- Chopped ham and pineapple
- Black beans, corn, red peppers and tomato
- Shredded cheese and sliced cucumber

Instead of a tortilla, try a "lettuce leaf" wrap with any of the above combos

Try soy, pumpkin, sunflower and pea butters or hummus instead of peanut butter on sandwiches or crackers

Instead of Sandwiches

- Whole grain pancakes or waffles with fruit and yogurt
- Build your own pizza with English muffin or pita, tomato sauce, vegetables and grated cheese
- Falafel in a whole wheat pita, carrot sticks
- Hard cooked egg, whole grain crackers and red pepper strips
- Burrito with salsa
- Homemade muffin (e.g., blueberry bran), with yogurt and veggie sticks
- Grain based salad (e.g., tabbouleh) using bulgar, quinoa or barley
- As a change from bread, try whole wheat or whole grain: tortillas, flat bread, rice cakes, crackers, melba toast, bread sticks, chapatti, roti, or bannock



Dunk a Lunch

Fun ideas for dunking finger foods:

- Bean dip with pre-cut (can be store-bought pre-cut) veggies and bread
- Fresh cut or canned fruit mixed with plain yogurt
- French toast with yogurt and fruit puree
- Whole grain bread sticks with fresh tomato salsa and guacamole



Follow the Milky Way...

- Veggie sticks and cheese
- Apple and cheese chunks
- Chilled milk or fortified soy beverage
- Milk-based pudding
- A fruit smoothie in a thermos
- Whole grain cereal with milk and sliced fruit.
- Yogurt parfait: Layer plain yogurt, fruit and granola or other cereal



Pack a Safe Lunch

- Refrigerate lunches that are made ahead of time
- Use an insulated bag with a freezer pack or chilled thermos to keep food cool. Chill milk or freeze drinking water or juice in plastic containers to keep food cool.
- Use a wide mouth thermos to keep hot food hot. Pre-heat thermos with hot water before filling.
- Wash all vegetables well, even if the package says “pre-washed”
- Wash lunch containers after every use
- Do not reuse plastic bags – they can hold bacteria



Allergy Aware: Some schools have rules about the types of foods brought to the school to help keep students with potentially life-threatening food allergies safe. Read the ingredient list on the food label every time you buy something. If the food includes any of the top 10 common food allergens, they will be shown in the ingredient list or in a separate “contains” statement. Some common food allergens are peanut, tree nuts, soy, milk and seafood.

Last Night's Leftovers make a Tasty Lunch!

Leftovers can be sent cold, or hot, in a thermos

- Leftover pizza
- Curry
- Kebabs (e.g. meat or chicken, cheese, fruit, veggies)
- Chili
- Whole wheat steamed Asian bun
- Casserole
- Stir fried vegetables with tofu
- Perogies/pot stickers
- Homemade baked samosas
- Spaghetti and meatballs
- Vietnamese salad rolls
- Macaroni and cheese
- Chicken drumstick
- Baked beans
- Stew
- Soup or chowder

Healthy Eating Tips:

- It is normal for a child's taste to change often. It can take many exposures to new foods before children learn to eat them.
- Try to choose cereals with no added sugars when possible or compare Nutrition Facts information and choose those with less sugar.
- For help choosing healthy packaged foods, check out the Brand Name Food List from HealthLinkBC bnfl.healthlinkbc.ca
- Water is the best choice to satisfy thirst. Kids do not need sugary drinks or juice.

For More Information:

Dietitian services at HealthLink BC:
Call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian or go to www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating/emaildietitian.html to email your question.
www.healthyeatingatschool.ca

Search for Health Canada food allergies www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/healthy-living/your-health/food-nutrition/food-allergies.html

Free, online food allergy training for people with life-threatening allergies, their families, caregivers and others: www.allergyaware.ca

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