

Building Healthy Eating Habits



The best way to build healthy eating habits is to begin at an early age. Over time, you will discover that small changes will have greater results.

Here are some tips to help guide your little ones to eating healthier.

Don't use food as a reward

Tightly controlling food habits may lead to an unhealthy relationship with food. As children grow, their appetite can change. Forcing a child to finish food off their plate, or telling them to eat all of their vegetables before leaving the table can actually lead to a child not liking certain foods and having a negative connection to what they eat.

Raising healthy eaters

Family meal time is a good time to teach proper eating habits.

It can be a challenge to teach good behavior to kids all of the time, but it's important to show them behaviors you want them to follow. One way to do this is by allowing children to help plan meals with you. Take them grocery shopping or to a local farmers market. Make it a fun time preparing meals together.

Force feeding is a NO GO

Don't bribe or use food as a prize or punishment.

Avoid using dessert as the prize for eating the meal. Doing so teaches kids to connect food as good or bad. Down the road, this can lead to emotional eating, an unhealthy relationship with food and forming habits like eating when not hungry. Instead, offer non-food rewards such as a longer playtime outdoors, stickers or a trip to the park.

See reverse side →



Improving the Palate

Introducing a variety of different foods to children early on helps to expand their palate and provide the nutrition that they need to grow into healthy young adults. Eating food that is in season also offers more nutrition, better taste, and may even be lower in cost.

Want them to eat more veggies?

Try these!

- Add small slices of vegetables to spaghetti sauce
- Make a Greek yogurt dipping sauce for vegetables
- Put raw vegetables out for kids to snack on while they wait for dinner



Some food items may taste bitter to children, so try adding a little seasoning, a fresh squeeze of lemon or top with applesauce to sweeten.

Remember, it can take many tries to learn which foods your kids will truly like, so be patient and make the experience learning about food a fun activity.

If you would like to learn more about healthy eating habits, contact us at memberhealth@regalmed.com or visit HealthyWayEvents.com.

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthy-aging/say-yes-to-nonfood-rewards><https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthy-aging/say-yes-to-nonfood-rewards><https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/habits.html><https://health.clevelandclinic.org/5-dos-and-donts-for-teaching-kids-good-eating-habits/>https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/index.html

