



## Give your children building blocks for a healthy lifestyle

by teaching them the importance of good nutrition and regular physical activity. Eating well and being physically active every day are keys to your child's health and well-being. Eating too many high calorie foods and getting too little physical activity can lead to excessive weight gain and physical health problems, such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, now being diagnosed in children. Obesity also is associated with an increased risk of other health problems such as depression.

You play an important role in helping your child, and the entire family, learn about healthy eating and regular physical activity. Parents have the power to set examples and choose what is available in the home. Make healthy eating and daily physical activity fun to help children learn good habits to last a lifetime. It's also important to remember that just because your child doesn't have a weight problem does not mean they are healthy. Normal weight children who don't eat a balanced diet and get adequate physical activity may be at risk for health problems.

## Tips to Get Started

- Encourage your family to eat at least 5 servings of brightly colored vegetables and fruits a day. You can start the day with 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Slice fruit on top of cereal. Serve salad with lunch and an apple as an afternoon snack. Include vegetables with dinner. When fresh fruits and vegetables are not available, frozen and canned (in their own juice or water) are great alternatives!
- Leave the candy, soft drinks, chips and cookies at the store and keep your home "safe". Substitute junk food with fruits, vegetables, nuts, and low-fat or nonfat milk products. Your child will soon learn to make smart food choices outside your home as well.
- Serve children child-sized portions and let your child ask for more if still hungry. Don't force children to clean their plates.
- Be consistent. Establish a family meal routine and set times for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Eat together whenever possible.  
  
Turn off the TV during meals and limit kids' snacking when watching TV.
- Serve a vegetable or fruit with every meal and at snack time.

