



## Why Healthy Eating Matters

Childhood and adolescence is a time of growth, development, and learning. How you choose and prepare your food will shape your family's attitude, skills, and eating behaviours.

You can help your children develop healthy eating habits by using these ideas.

1. Eat together. Try to have meals together as a family as often as possible.
2. Make time for healthy eating so that you and your kids are not rushed.
3. Enjoy “family-style” meals. In family-style meals, food is put into larger bowls or serving dishes on the table. Family members then serve themselves based on their hunger cues and food preferences.
4. Drink water or unsweetened drinks
5. Make healthy foods the routine. Every day, offer a variety of:
  - a. Vegetables and fruit, including: dark green vegetables such as spinach, kale and bok choy each day. Orange vegetables such as carrots and sweet potato most days
  - b. Whole grain foods, such as: oats, wild rice, whole wheat pasta
  - c. Protein foods such as: eggs, nuts and seeds, fish and shellfish, beans, peas, and lentils, lean red meats, including wild game
  - d. Lower fat dairy products such as milk and yogurt, fortified soy beverages, tofu, soybeans and other soy products
6. Limit the amount of highly processed foods you offer. Prepare meals and snacks with little to no added sodium, sugar and saturated fat.
7. Put away screens and toys during meal time. Yours AND theirs.
8. Get your kids cooking. Regardless of age, they can help with simple food-related tasks.

