

Extension

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Are You a Healthy Role Model?

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Look who's watching! Young children learn through observation. They love to follow what their parents do. They like to copy your mannerisms. They watch you to see what you are eating and drinking.

Parents are the most important influence on their young children. Young children often look to their parents as role models in life. You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life

but modeling a healthy lifestyle is the most essential. You have to show by example. Let your child see you practicing what you preach.



Tips to benefit your children's overall health now and in the future:

1. Try new foods. Serve new foods at the beginning of a meal, when everyone is hungrier. Offer only one new food at a time and serve it with another favorite food that your child likes. Each family member could take turns describing the aroma of the new food and its texture and tastes.
2. Offer a variety of food. Children that eat a variety of foods get the nutrients they need from the different food groups (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and calcium).
3. Incorporate more physical activity into the day. Let your children see you be active. Involve the whole family. Walk, run, swim, and just play with your child. Make up games to see who can do the most jumping jacks or sit-ups. Parents should help children achieve one hour of physical activity a day.
4. Limit TV and computer time also called "screen time" to 2 hours or less per day. This does not include homework, only recreational or entertainment screen time.
5. Get creative and cook together. Cooking together is a great way to spend time with your children. They can help you come up with fun recipes. Cut bread for sandwiches into shapes using cookie cutters. Let them assist you in stirring food and setting the table.
6. Offer the same foods for everyone. Avoid the "short-order cook" style by making different dishes to please each person. Short order cooking teaches children they get what they want to eat. Offering the same foods to each family member will save you time and money.
7. Limit consumption of soda and sugar sweetened beverages. Soda has no nutritional value and is high in sugar. Many people don't realize the dangers and negative effects

- that high sugar consumption has on the human body. Try water and low fat milk instead.
8. Reward with attention instead of food. Help children feel special by using encouraging words, hugs, and your time rather than offering sweets as rewards. Sweets have empty calories and very little nutrition. Have your family put together a list of fun, non-food rewards that doesn't cost much.
 9. Eat mindfully. Slow down, chew your food and share your meals. Share a fun and stress free meal. Turn off the phone and television. Focus on each other at the table.

Let's Talk

Teach young children about food. There are many books to read about food and where it comes from. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods come from. Encourage your children to help your whole family eat from all the different food groups. Talk about ways your family can increase the servings of fruits and vegetables you eat every day. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides vitamins and minerals, important for supporting growth and development in young children. By demonstrating how to make healthier choices now, you help your children to make these smart decisions as they get older.



Recipes for Health:

Baked Apples and Sweet Potatoes

6 servings



Ingredients:

- 5 sweet potatoes (cooked)
- 4 apples
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 cup hot water
- 2 tablespoons honey

Directions:

1. Boil 5 sweet potatoes in water until they are almost tender.
2. After the sweet potatoes cool, peel and slice them.
3. Peel the apples. Remove the cores, and slice the apples.
4. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
5. Grease the casserole dish with butter or margarine.
6. Put a layer of sweet potatoes on the bottom of the dish.
7. Add a layer of apple slices.
8. Add some sugar, salt, and tiny pieces of margarine to the apple layer.
9. Repeat steps 6, 7, and 8 to make more layers of sweet potatoes, apples, and sugar/salt.
10. On the top layer of apples, sprinkle the rest of the brown sugar and margarine pieces.
11. Sprinkle the top layer with nutmeg.
12. Mix the hot water and honey together. Pour the mix over the top layer.
13. Bake for about 30 minutes until apples are tender.

Recipe From: <https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/baked-apples-and-sweet-potatoes>