

Health and Wellbeing: Healthy Eating

Health and wellbeing is about learning how to lead healthy and active lives, becoming confident, happy and forming friendships and relationships with others that are based on respect. It is also about managing feelings and having the skills to meet challenges, make good choices and manage change.



- **Do you want to improve your child's diet?**
- **Are you unsure of how to provide healthy options for your child?**
- **Do you want to make mealtimes an enjoyable experience for you and your child?**

Healthy Eating should be a positive experience for all children as this will help them to develop lifelong healthy eating habits. All children need regular healthy meals, snacks and drinks to help develop their health and wellbeing. Through sharing positive food experiences with your family and others and being offered food in a caring way good eating patterns will be established. Children's early experiences of food help to shape their later eating habits. Mealtimes and preparing food should be an enjoyable experience for both you and your child.

Healthy Eating is essential for proper growth and development. Babies play with food as well as eating it and

this helps to develop their senses. Healthy eating helps social development and learning as well as language skills. It can also help improve your child's concentration leading to higher levels of interest, curiosity and playful learning. By enjoying mealtimes together as a family you are encouraging talking, listening, sharing and learning. Food can be fun and it is something that you can enjoy together with your child, for example, baking bread, making the dinner.

You can help to develop your child's health and wellbeing through everyday activities and mealtimes are an ideal place to start to develop positive eating habits.

Please turn over to find out different ways you can help to develop healthy eating habits with your child. ➡

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR YOU TO TRY AT HOME TO HELP DEVELOP HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Babies develop eating habits from birth either from breast feeding or bottle feeding. Whilst pregnant you can make an informed decision as to what is the right choice for you and your baby.

Make sure your child knows that it is ok to play and make a mess with food. Children are experimenting and being creative.

Give your baby plenty of different taste experiences. Sometimes they will taste things a few times before they begin to enjoy it.

Try to establish regular eating patterns and eat together as a family as often as you can. Mealtimes should be a pleasant experience full of learning opportunities.

Introduce different healthy food options so that your child can make choices. Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables with different colours, tastes and textures.

Encourage your child to talk about their likes and dislikes whilst offering choice. Suggest words to describe the taste, for example, sweet, sour, tangy, spicy etc.

Try to ensure your child has their five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Put vegetables in soups, casseroles and pasta.

Offer fruit and vegetables cut into sticks or chunks.

Try child friendly fruit such as satsumas (easy peel) and seedless grapes and bananas.

Add fresh or dried fruit to breakfast cereal.



Check the sugar, salt and saturated fat content of food. Look out for the colour coding system on packets that will help you identify this more easily. More green and less red is good.

Introduce different types of bread such as pitta, bagels, wraps, crusty bread/roll.

Try wholemeal bread or half white and half wholemeal.

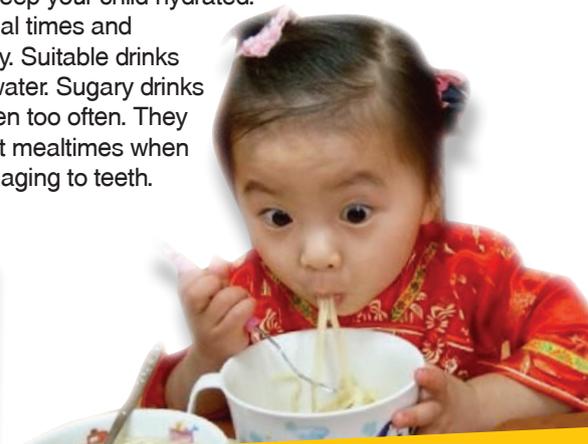
Preparing food together will help your child to try out lots of different taste experiences during preparation and cooking.

Give older children responsibility, such as setting the table.

Encourage your child to help tidy the kitchen and keep it clean. Talk about why this is important.

It is important to keep your child hydrated.

Offer drinks at meal times and throughout the day. Suitable drinks include milk and water. Sugary drinks should not be taken too often. They are best offered at mealtimes when they are less damaging to teeth.



Hopefully these suggestions have sparked some ideas of your own. Have fun trying them with your child.