

# Size-Wise Nutrition



Parents can help their children adopt the following guidelines for healthy lifestyles.

- **Be a good role model.** This is the most important tip of all for parents, because studies have shown that children learn their eating and exercise habits from their parents.
- **Limit “junk foods.”** Chips, cookies and candy are empty calories with little or no nutritional value. Offer them for special occasions only.
- **Choose drinks wisely.** Water is best. Use 1% or skim milk for children 2 and up. Discourage sweetened drinks such as soda, sports drinks and drinks made from powdered mixes. These are mostly sugar. Limit 100% fruit juice to 6-8 oz. a day.
- **Use fats and oils sparingly.** Don't serve fried foods. Bake, broil, grill or steam instead. Cook with as little fat as possible (use non-fat cooking sprays). Avoid butter or margarine as a seasoning or spread. Switch to low-fat salad dressings.
- **Slow down on fast foods.** On average, restaurant food has 55 percent more fat and calories than foods prepared from scratch at home. Fast food also tends to be higher in salt.
- **Pay attention to serving sizes.** Toddlers need only a fraction of adult portions. Make sure portions are age-appropriate. And remember, if you eat super-sized portions, your weight may become super-sized, too.



Children's Hospital  
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- **Read food labels.** Become familiar with ingredients and recommended serving sizes. Some packages that look small enough to serve only one person actually contain two or more servings.
- **Eat only when hungry.** People with weight problems often have a hard time noticing their own feelings of hunger and fullness. Don't make your children clean their plates. Allow them to stop eating when they're full.
- **Offer a variety of healthy foods.** Encourage your children to try new fruits and vegetables. Make it easy to reach for a piece of fruit or raw vegetables at snack time.
- **Don't use food as entertainment or comfort.** Children absorbed in TV shows can overeat without even realizing it. Watching TV also can trigger thoughts of snacking when a child isn't even hungry. Don't offer food as a comfort to a child who is depressed, sad, angry or bored. Acknowledge their feelings; help them find alternative activities. Avoid using food as a reward for accomplishments.
- **Get moving.** Help your child find a sport or activity that she likes and encourage her to do it daily. 60 minutes of exercise every day is the goal, but even a little movement is better than none. Walk, bike, skate, swim, jump rope, take the stairs, play basketball, dance. Just keep moving!
- **Increase self-esteem.** Stay positive. Focus on your child's special qualities, strengths and efforts. Reinforce good eating and exercise habits with positive attention, support and praise.



*Your child's pediatrician should be your primary source of advice about your child's health.*