



We Can![®] Parent Tips: Be a Good Health Role Model



As a parent, you are a family leader. You are your children's most important role model—especially when it comes to making healthy choices. If you eat right, move more, and limit your screen time, your kids will, too!

You have more power than you know! Use that power to improve your family's health.

Make Your Home a Healthy Eating Zone:

- Eat healthy. Your children are watching. They will follow your lead.
- Stock your kitchen with healthy foods—fruits, veggies, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products. If you don't buy unhealthy food, your kids won't eat it at home.
- Put healthy foods where they are easy to see.
- Plan healthy meals with your kids ahead of time, so fast food isn't as tempting. Then cook the meals with them.
- Eat together! Children who eat meals with their family are more likely to eat fruits, veggies, and other healthy foods.
- Give your kids a healthy breakfast every day. Good choices are oatmeal or whole-grain cereal, fruit, and low-fat milk.

Get Your Family Moving:

- Get off the couch and move. If your kids see you doing physical activity, they will want to move more, too.
- Encourage your children to be active. Help them figure out what physical activities they like and can do often.
- Start early in life. Kids are more likely to be active later in life if they start when they're young.
- Plan activities the whole family can do together.

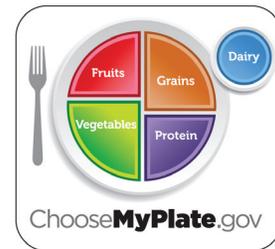
Limit Screen Time:

- Limit your kids' time in front of TV, video games, and the computer. Setting rules can help cut their screen time by nearly 3 hours a day.
- Set a good example. Limit your own screen time.
- Know the link between screen time and unhealthy foods. Kids who have more screen time are more likely to eat foods high in fat and added sugar (like sodas or fried foods).
- Teach your kids that many of the ads they see on TV are for less-healthy food and drink choices. Knowledge is a powerful thing!

For more information, visit:
<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>
or call 1-866-35-WE CAN.



be a healthy role model for children



10 tips for setting good examples

You are the most important influence on your child. You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!

1 show by example

Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

2 go food shopping together



Grocery shopping can teach your child about food and nutrition. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods come from. Let your children make healthy choices.

3 get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters. Name a food your child helps make. Serve “Janie’s Salad” or “Jackie’s Sweet Potatoes” for dinner. Encourage your child to invent new snacks. Make your own trail mixes from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.

4 offer the same foods for everyone

Stop being a “short-order cook” by making different dishes to please children. It’s easier to plan family meals when everyone eats the same foods.



5 reward with attention, not food

Show your love with hugs and kisses. Comfort with hugs and talks. Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. It lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. When meals are not eaten, kids do not need “extras”—such as candy or cookies—as replacement foods.

6 focus on each other at the table

Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later. Try to make eating meals a stress-free time.



7 listen to your child

If your child says he or she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack—even if it is not a scheduled time to eat. Offer choices. Ask “Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?” instead of “Do you want broccoli for dinner?”

8 limit screen time

Allow no more than 2 hours a day of screen time like TV and computer games. Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity.

9 encourage physical activity

Make physical activity fun for the whole family. Involve your children in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child—instead of sitting on the sidelines. Set an example by being physically active and using safety gear, like bike helmets.



10 be a good food role model

Try new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal, when your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.