

WHAT DOES HEALTHY EATING MEAN TO YOUR CHILD?



ENJOYING A VARIED DIET

All foods contain different nutrients, vitamins and minerals. In order to get all the nutrients they need children need to eat a varied diet containing lots of different food groups. Aim for three child sized balanced meals a day, including 5 portions of vegetables and fruit.

HAVING A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

Having a healthy relationship with food will ensure a positive attitude to eating as they grow into adults. Encourage your child to understand where their food comes from and get them preparing and cooking food from a young age. Try not to turn meal times into a battle. Give a choice where possible to help children feel in control. Explain what is good eating behaviour, praise good behaviour and try to ignore or distract if their is challenging behaviour at meal times.

FOLLOWING THE EATWELL GUIDE

Getting the right amount of food groups in their diet promotes health and well being. See the eatwell guide for more details.

ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATE PORTION SIZES

Avoid adult size plates for younger children. Start off with small portions for a child and let them ask for more if they are still hungry. Try not to make a child eat everything on their plate and allow them to eat slowly. Have set mealtime and try and eat together as a family so that meal times are also a chance to talk.

FOOD GROUPS

VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

Vegetables and fruit contain nutrients, vitamins, minerals and fibre. These help keep the immune system strong and healthy, reducing the chance of getting sick.



As a rough guide a portion of vegetables or fruit should be the size of your child's palm.

STARCHY FOOD

Children should have a source of carbohydrate/starch with every meal. These include potatoes rice, pasta and bread. Choose wholegrain/ brown varieties as these provide more fibre and nutrients. These release energy slowly so they will keep children fuller and more energised for longer.

PROTEIN

Protein encourages healthy bones, growth, and brain development so is very important during childhood. Good sources of protein include lean meat, fish, eggs, yoghurt and cheese. You can also get protein from beans and pulses. Try to eat at least two portions of fish a week with one of them being oily such as salmon, mackerel or sardines which can be fresh, frozen or canned.

DAIRY

Dairy products like cheese, milk and yoghurt give children a great deal of nourishment. They are a good source of protein as well as providing vitamins C, A and B12. Choose lower fat and sugar free options.

FAT AND SUGAR

Fats are important for children, but in moderation. The beneficial fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats) can be found in nuts, seeds, avocados and oily fish. S

Saturated fats in for example pastries, cakes, crisps and fried foods are not beneficial to your child's diet and are often found along with high levels of sugar and salt. These types of food should be kept for an occasional treat. Too much sugar can disrupt children's energy levels, damage teeth and lead to weight gain.

SALT

Start looking at food labels and keep in mind that many pre-packaged foods contain lots of salt. As a general guide children aged 4-11 should have between 3-6 grs a day. 1 Babybel cheese contains 1.9g salt

DRINKS

Between meals the best drinks to offer children are water and milk. Drinks such as fruit juice, squash and carbonated drinks with or without sugar should be enjoyed as an occasional treat and taken with meals diluted (juice) to limit the damage to teeth.

If you have any issues or concerns regarding your child's growth please speak to a member of the primary health care team or contact the school health team on 0208 549 6323 or email ku19@yourhealthcare.org

Useful websites

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/cards#fFoX4iubj8Xfh2jJ.97>

<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood/pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>



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