

Calling All Parents

May 2004



Make Healthy Eating Hassle-Free

Source: Growing Together, May 2000

Simply rethinking how you shop and store groceries could help your family eat healthier, say nutritionists with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

“Expecting busy family members to stop and peel a carrot or remember apples stashed in the crisper is unrealistic,” says Becky Gorham, a research dietitian with Baylor’s USDA/ARS Children’s Nutrition Research Center. “The snacks that are usually eaten are quick, easy to find and easy to eat.”

Easy does it: Bulk purchases might cost less per pound, but individual portions are more attractive to the “eat-it-now” crowd.

Stock the refrigerator with “grab and go” plastic pint bottles of low-fat milk and water, boxes of 100 percent calcium-fortified juice, easy-to-eat yogurt, cubed cheese, low-fat string cheese, and snack bags of mini-carrots.

Pack pantry shelves with mini boxes of raisins. Re-portion packages of whole-wheat crackers and trail mix into easy-to-grab snack bags.

For faster, healthier family meals, stock no-fuss “salad in the bag” salads, individually frozen poultry pieces and plenty of canned and frozen vegetables. Also, consider grilling extra chicken to slice and freeze for quick chicken quesadillas, barbeque chicken sandwiches or to add to soup.

Create attention-grabbing snacks: Place a bowl of tempting, easy-to-eat fresh fruit on the kitchen counter. Snip washed grapes into snack-size portions. Keep pre-cut fruits, ready-to-eat vegetables and a small bowl of low-fat dip on the most visible shelf in the refrigerator.

Make small, healthy changes: Switch to 100% fruit juice, 100% whole-grain bread and ready-to-eat cereals, soft or liquid margarine, and low-fat milk and dairy products. Add nuts, seeds or fruit to salads.

Select more fish, poultry and leaner cuts of meat. Incorporate vegetarian entrees, stir-fries or other dishes that feature vegetables and grains into your menu planning.

Downsize treats: Super-size bags of snack foods are no nutritional bargain. Help your family practice restraint by downsizing the packages you buy. Also, consider limiting the variety of snack foods to reduce temptation.

Consider advertising: Post “ads” on the front of the refrigerator and inside the pantry door to let your family know what healthy foods are in the house. Don’t be afraid to be flashy and creative. You might even entice the kids to help design the signs. Make the healthy choices more obvious, convenient and tempting.

PARENTS’ CORNER Cooperation and Helping

Instead of “building character”, competition is more likely to heighten a child’s fear of failure, invite comparison with others, and diminish self-esteem. Cooperative activities enhance children’s feeling of personal power and help them feel more a part of the social group.

How you act toward your children is the most powerful form of teaching you have to offer. Involve them in cooperative activities with you. Encourage them to help you when you have a problem or are in distress. Accept this assistance even when the amount of effective aid they have to offer is not very great. Build habits first, effectiveness second.

Avoid comparing children to others to motivate them to do better. Such comparisons aggravate insecurity and increase competitiveness.

Source: Excerpt from The Parents’ Page contributed by Charles A. Smith, Kansas State CES

Do's and Don'ts for Travel with Children

Do plan ahead, but
Don't plan to do everything you plan;
Do take time for rest and good nourishment;
Don't take your home schedule along;
Do find places for running, shouting and playing;
Don't overtax their staying power in restaurants and museums;
Do let them know that you're enjoying their company;
Don't be amazed at how long you'll treasure the memories.

Source: Parenting the Preschooler, Joan E. LeFebvre,
University of Wisconsin CES

Positive Conversations

Positive conversations that can change a child's behavior begin with the words:
I like the way you are . . .
I believe in you.
I know you can . . .
I love you, I don't like . . .
I will help you. We will do this together.
You are so (smart, sweet, strong) that I think you can do better.
Most of the time, you do this really well. Can you try harder today?
I am so proud of you because . . .
Let's use our quiet voices. You are making a little too much noise.
I am disappointed with what you did. I know you can do better.
Are you being a good helper?
Are you doing your best?
Have you shown Alice how much you like to share?
I need you to . . .
I told Daddy (Mother) what a good job you did yesterday.
Let's see how you do today.

Source: Growing Together, March 2000

For information about the Extension Service in Boone County, call 765-482-0750.

Nancy Hunter

Nancy Hunter, Extension Educator
Consumer and Family Sciences