

Healthy eating shouldn't be a battle. Remember, as a parent, you are responsible for what food is provided and where it is eaten; your child is responsible for how much and whether they will eat. To develop healthy eating habits, kids should be encouraged to try new foods and eat only when they are hungry.

## How Can I Help My Child Eat Better?

- **Eat meals together as a family.** It will help kids eat more nutritious foods and do well in school.
- **Be a good role model.** If your child sees you enjoying healthy foods, he or she is more likely to do the same now and later in life.
- **Turn the TV off.** We're more likely to overeat when we snack and eat meals in front of the TV.
- **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** Have a variety on hand for easy snacking instead of salty and sugary snack foods, especially if your child won't eat them at meals.
- **Drink more water.** Sticking to water, lowfat milk, and other unsweetened beverages is an easy way to reduce the amount of added sugar in your child's diet.



- **Involve your kids.** Make eating healthy fun by involving kids in the planning and preparing of meals and snacks. This can include helping to decide on the menu, stirring, and cutting food into fun shapes. Kids are more willing to eat food they prepare.
- **Start the day with breakfast.** Breakfast provides kids with the fuel they need to learn in school.
- **Go for variety.** Offer whole grains, vegetables, low fat dairy products, and lean protein daily. Keep serving new foods even if your child does not eat them at first. It often takes 10-12 introductions before young kids accept new foods.
- **Teach portion control.** Help kids learn what is an appropriate amount of food to eat by using the size of their fist, the palm of their hand, and a baseball as visuals.
- **Be smart.** Talk with your health care provider (or school nurse) if you are concerned about your child's eating habits or weight. A child's weight management program should be supervised by a primary care provider.

## Healthy Snack Ideas

Snacking is important for kids to fuel their bodies so that they can perform their best! Snacking should not take the place of regular meals, and instead should help to fill in the gaps from missing foods at meals. A nutritious snack comes from at least two different food groups, like fruits and vegetables. Here are some more ideas:

- ◆ Apple & pear wedges with low-fat yogurt
- ◆ Whole grain crackers with low-fat cheese slices, or peanut butter
- ◆ Pretzels or air-popped popcorn sprinkled with salt-free seasoning mix
- ◆ Dry cereal with low-fat or other fat-free milk
- ◆ Half a turkey or lean ham sandwich, easy on the mayonnaise
- ◆ Homemade trail mix – nuts, raisins, dry cereal
- ◆ Crunchy cucumbers and jicama with hummus
- ◆ Homemade fruit smoothie made with low-fat milk or yogurt, and frozen or fresh fruit
- ◆ Tortilla wraps with lean meats, low-fat cheese, and shredded veggies

## Where can I get more information?

- **www.ActionForHealthyKids.org** - refer to the NM Wellness Toolkit
- **Kids Nutrition** [www.kidsnutrition.org](http://www.kidsnutrition.org)
- **School Lunches, Smart Yet Satisfying!** [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Parents/lunch.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Parents/lunch.html)