

Healthy Eating for Active Children

Active children need to eat and snack well to do their best at school and sports.

Outlined below are some great ways to make it easier to eat well:

Make Breakfast an important meal of the day. It can be up to 12 hours since their last meal, so children need to 'refuel' for the day ahead. Some healthy choices include: cereals and milk, toast, English muffins, fresh fruit or juice, eggs and yoghurt.

Water Works, so encourage your child to take water with them everywhere to keep them hydrated throughout the day. Keep a jug of cool water on the bench or on the table during meal times.

Snack Smart. Encourage your child to choose healthy snacks, such as 1) fresh fruit (try small fruit or cut pieces), 2) fruit loaf/bun, 3) pikelets (add mashed banana to the mix), 4) rice crackers or pretzels, 5) popcorn, 6) dried fruit, 7) yoghurt, 8) wholemeal crackers with cheese, 9) fruit muffins, 10) rice cakes with tomato and cheese, 11) toasted sandwiches, 12) vegetable or pumpkin soup, 13) high fibre breakfast cereal with milk and a sliced banana, 14) toasted English muffin with spreads, 15) fruit smoothie (try milk, a small banana, vanilla and cinnamon), 16) raw vegetables like carrots and capsicum sticks with dip.

Eat at the Table. Avoid letting your child eat in front of the TV or the computer - get them into the habit to eat or snack at the dining table or kitchen bench.

Tasty Exploration. Encourage your child to try different foods from different cultures. Exposure to lots of different tastes and flavours adds excitement to meals.

Get Active. Active children are generally healthier children so:

- Encourage your child to try a range of different sports;
- Make sport as much "fun" as possible;

- Develop a new family activity, such as indoor rock climbing, bike riding, rollerblading, skiing or sailing;
- Make activity a regular part of the family routine;
- Give sporting goods as gifts rather than toys.
- Give the chauffeur some time off and walk or ride a bike with the children to your destination, rather than drive;
- Aim for 30-60 minutes of moderate activity every day plus 20-30 minutes of stronger activity up to three times a week;

Help your child find his\her balance, not only regarding nutrition, but also with physical activities, indoor play and homework and unstructured play such as day dreaming, creating, thinking and reading.

References: Pfizer Australia Health Report "Easy Family Eating for Healthy Kids". DAA Australia and Pfizer Australia. 12th issue 2004.

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