

Healthy eating for weight management April 2017



Bethany Rife M.D.

We can all learn to make healthier choices. When we have children it is even more important to educate about healthy eating and model healthy habits for them. Healthy lifestyle should be a family goal and is much more effective and successful when the whole family is involved. Here are some suggestions to get you started. I suggest making one change at a time so that you can enjoy the success of changing that habit and use that motivation to make the next change. Over time, your family will be healthier without constant fall backs into old habits. Encourage each other and keep each other accountable.

Beverages:

High sugar drinks to avoid - sweet tea, any juice, Gatorade/Powerade, juice boxes, sodas, etc.

Replace with water, milk, unsweetened tea

Using low calorie/fake sweeteners can be helpful, but moving to no sweetener is preferable for daily habits, using sweet things as occasional events

Snacks:

Avoid "non-nutritive" food - so if it is not giving the child some type of nutrition it is not necessary and should be avoided. Examples: pretzels, goldfish, crackers, chips

Replace with: cheese, yogurt, fruit (get creative and buy fruits that aren't typical - plum, pear, mango, and kiwi). Vegetables - bell pepper slices, carrots, cucumber, celery. Granola bars and protein bars can be good too.

Dips are usually fine and will help the child adjust to the flavor of the new food.

If you don't buy it, they can't eat it, so only buy the good things, they will either learn to eat them or wait for the next meal.

Meals:

Focus on protein rich main course

Breakfast: eggs, sausage, protein bar, healthy cereal, oatmeal, protein shake/smoothie, find something that fits into your schedule, may need to prepare in advance

Lunch: find out what the kids are eating at school and decide if making lunches to take would be better, suggestions: sandwich, wrap, meat and cheese roll up, with cheese stick or yogurt as snack with veggies or fruit. Sandwich and 2-3 snacks with water bottle should be fine.

Dinner: protein based with vegetables and maybe a starch. Keep serving sizes appropriate for the child - about the size of their palm. If they want more food give the meat or vegetable, not extra carbohydrates. If you know they have had enough to eat, it is ok to offer water or ask them to wait 10 minutes before having second helpings.

Get kids involved in the kitchen! They all need to learn how to cook and they can help prepare new foods and look for healthy recipes online. Teenagers can trade off being responsible for dinner one night a week.

Every family is different and our busy schedules often make food a grab and go so we can get to the next event. Make healthy eating a priority in your home. Planning can be essential. If you know you will be busy prepare meals and freeze or prepare something healthy the family can eat for a few days. Bring healthy snacks in the car to hold you over and prevent unnecessary fast food stops. Get creative and out of your comfort zone!

If you have questions or are concerned about your child, please contact our office at 281-374-9700.