

MYRTLE AVENUE Pediatrics



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FEEDING YOUR TODDLER

Feeding is one of a parent's most important jobs. It is how we help our children to grow healthy and strong. Meals and snack-times give you a chance to help your toddler to learn healthy eating habits, feel important, feel loved, understood and respected, trust that others will care for them, and feel good about themselves and their body.

SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME A HEALTHY EATER:

1. Meals are about more than food. This can be a time to connect with your child to support his development, and build family ties. Turn off the TV (computers, etc) at mealtime.
2. Create routines around mealtime. Routines help children feel loved and secure. Establish regular meal and snack times in order to help your child look forward to each meal.
3. Offer 3 to 4 healthy food choices (that your child likes) at each meal. Research shows children will choose healthy foods when given a choice so offer servings from each food group every day.
4. Don't force your child to eat. This often results in children refusing the food and eating less.
5. Get enough calcium in the diet by offering milk (no more than 2 to 3 cups a day), cheese and yogurt along with green leafy vegetables, soy beans and calcium enriched foods like some juices. Provide whole milk from 1 year until 2, and then gradually get your child used to low-fat milk.
6. Snacks can be an important part of a nutritious diet. Good snack choices include crackers with cheese or peanut butter, pretzels, bread sticks, yogurt, custard, pudding, hard-boiled eggs, graham crackers, leftover "finger-foods" like small soft pieces of chicken or meat-loaf, fresh fruit, vegetables, & cereal. Avoid or limit salty snacks.
7. Limit juices (4-8 ounces per day) low in nutritional value and high in sugar and calories. Avoid sweetened juices, fruit drinks or sodas. They can fill your child and decrease their appetite for healthy foods. Offer water instead.
8. Get enough iron in the diet by offering meats, such as pork, lean steak, hamburger, and lamb, as well as chicken and fish. Other sources include baked beans, dried fruit, baked potatoes with skin, lima beans, broccoli, peas, enriched pasta, breads, and cereals.
9. Don't give up on new foods! You may have to offer your child a new food 10 to 15 times before he will eat it... so be patient and keep trying.

*Adapted from www.zerotothree.org. Other web sites about nutrition: www.aap.org, www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/PyrBook.pdf, www.eatright.org, www.EllynSatter.com

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