

5 Tips to Raising a Healthy Eater

By Lisa Lau, Registered Dietitian at the Georgina Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic

Do you feel like you are constantly catering to a picky eater at home? Are you worried that your child may not be getting the nutrients he or she needs? Are you concerned with your child's weight? Often times, problems related to these concerns can be improved by making some small changes during meal times. Here are five things you can check for to see if your child is eating in an optimal feeding environment.

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As a parent, you decide *when* to offer meals and snacks. Depending on your child's age, you may want to schedule meals and snacks about 2-3 hours apart. Avoid catering to children's requests to have food or drinks outside of their regular snack time so that their appetite is not affected at their next meal. Water can be offered for thirst in between meals without affecting their appetite.

As a parent, you decide *where* to offer food to your child. Eating as a family, with everyone seated around the dinner table, allows your child to learn from you how to become a good eater. Research has shown that family meals can lead to healthier eaters (that's you and your children), better school grades, better self-esteem and better relationships with friends. Avoid distractions such as television or other toys at the table so your child can focus on eating and interacting with the family.

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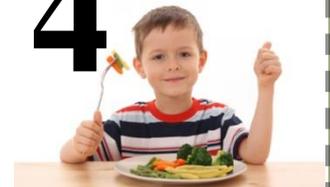


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As a parent, you decide *what* foods to offer. Offer at least one food that your child likes at meals and snack times, along with other familiar and new foods that are nutritious and wholesome. Continue to offer new foods for your child to try even if he or she didn't like it the first time. It may take at least 10-15 times before your child will actually eat the food!

Trust your child to decide *how much* they want to eat. Children are born with the ability to know when they are hungry or full. Respect your child's decision when they say they are full. Do not force your child to eat more than what he or she wants to or use food as a reward or punishment. If you are concerned that they did not eat enough, you can gently remind them that they will not be getting any food until the next snack time. Once your child understands this structure, they will learn to eat enough to keep them full until the next meal or snack.

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Keep mealtimes pleasant and let your child decide *whether* they want to eat a food. Gently encourage your child to try new foods at meal times. Do not pressure or bribe them to eat foods they do not want to eat. If your child refuses to try a food, try again next time. Let your child feel that meal times are an enjoyable time to try new things, not a stressful experience.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

February 2015

Parmesan Edamame

Meat is a challenging food for many children. If your child does not like to eat meat, you can offer alternative sources of protein such as eggs, peanut butter, tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds and soy-based foods. Here is a quick snack recipe using edamame (young, green soybeans).



Makes 1 serving (1 serving = 1 cup)

Ingredients:

1 cup	Edamame, frozen
1 tbsp	Parmesan cheese (optional)

Note: Edamame is available shelled or unshelled in the frozen food aisle in the grocery store. Depending on your child's age, they may enjoy squeezing the edamame beans out from the shells with their fingers. For children under 5 years of age, they should be served shelled edamame cut in half to reduce the risk of choking.

Directions:

1. Place a steamer basket in a large pot. Fill the pot with an inch of water, making sure the water does not touch the steamer basket. Cover the pot and bring water to a boil.
2. Add edamame into steamer basket. Cover. Steam for 2 minutes.
3. Place edamame beans into a bowl and sprinkle with parmesan cheese if desired.

Nutrition information (per serving without parmesan cheese):

157 calories, Fat 7 g (11% DV), Carbohydrate 10 g (3% DV), Protein 15 g, Sodium 103 mg (4% DV), Fibre 6 g (23% DV), Sugar 3 g, Calcium 140 mg (13% DV)