



Disease Proof Your Child:

Feeding Kids Right



Lifelong Habits Start Early. Food preferences and lifestyle habits of physical activity are established early in life. Building a diet with fruits, vegetables, healthful grains, and legumes from a young age will help children prefer those foods throughout their lives. These foods are rich in antioxidants, phytochemicals, and fiber, which help protect against disease and promote a healthful body weight. When a vegetarian diet is established at an early age, not only can it provide nutritional advantages, but it will also promote healthful eating habits beyond adolescence, to the teen years and into adulthood.

Eat off the Power Plate. Plan meals using the Power Plate: whole grains, vegetables, legumes, and fruits. Nutritious diets built from these food groups help children maintain a healthy weight and reduce their risk of certain diseases later in life.

Grains. Grains are rich in fiber and other complex carbohydrates, as well as protein, B vitamins, and magnesium. Refined grains and sweets such as cookies and cakes should be kept to a minimum. Whole grains include breads, hot and cold cereals, pasta, cooked grains such as rice and barley, and crackers.

Vegetables. Vegetables are packed with beta-carotene, folate, potassium, vitamin C, fiber, and other nutrients. Dark green vegetables, such as kale and broccoli, contain calcium* and vitamin K. Dark green, orange, and red vegetables include collard greens, dark green leaf lettuce, carrots, sweet potatoes, red tomatoes, and red bell peppers. Starchy vegetables include corn, green peas, baby lima beans, white potatoes, and plantains. Other vegetables include beets, cabbage, celery, green beans, mushrooms, onions, and zucchini, and many more.

Fruits. Fruits are rich in fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and folate. Be sure to include at least one serving each day of fruits that are high in vitamin C—citrus fruits, melons, and strawberries are all good choices. Fruit servings should be mainly whole fruits that are fresh, canned in 100 percent fruit juice, frozen, or dried.

Legumes, Nuts and Seeds. Beans, lentils, soy, nuts, and seeds are good sources of protein, iron, zinc, and B vitamins. Legumes are the richest sources of fiber. Products made from soy and other vegetable proteins can be used in place of meat in many recipes. Try tofu, veggie burgers, soy “meats,” seitan, and tempeh. Beans and lentils include black beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans or chickpeas, lentils, split peas, and black-eyed peas. One serving of beans and lentils is 1/2 cup cooked. One serving of hummus is 1/4 cup. Nuts, seeds, and soy include almonds, walnuts, peanut butter, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds. One serving equals 1 ounce mixed nuts, 2 tablespoons peanut or almond butter; 1/2 cup tofu; 2 ounces tempeh; 1 soy veggie burger patty; or an 8-ounce glass of unsweetened soy milk.



Dr. Benjamin Spock, pediatrician, medical researcher, and teacher, advised in his book *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care* that weight-loss programs for children should be based on changing the types of foods children eat rather than the amount of food they eat. He encouraged shifting the entire family away from oily fried foods, meats, and dairy products and toward low-fat, plant-based foods: grains, pasta, vegetables, legumes, and fruit. When this is done, he stated, “weight loss typically occurs without anyone going hungry.”⁶ This is the key to lifelong weight maintenance.

For more information, please visit:

-www.PCRM.org

-www.HealthySchoolLunches.org

-www.PCRM.org/Shop

Healthy Eating Tips:

- Identify three or four vegetarian recipes your family already enjoys.
- Experiment and broaden food options.
- Choose low-fat, healthful options whenever possible.
- Avoid foods and beverages with added sugar, fat, and salt.



You are here and you are committing to progress.

Assess - Evaluate current habits and think about how you would like things to be different.

Purpose - Find your why and your reason for wanting to make a healthy change.

Prioritize - What do you need to do to make this a priority in your life?

Mindset - Determine how you will choose to think about your change efforts.

Game Plan - Determine what is required and what strategies would yield the great return/reward. Set a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-oriented goal to reach for.

Action - Put the game plan into motion and implement strategies you came up with to help you achieve your goal.

Reflect - Think back on what you accomplished and what you learned from the experience.

Improve - Continue to progress and consider using this strategy to improve in another area of your life.

Lead - Lead by example and serve others. You are able to demonstrate to others what is possible and have a positive influence on them.