

Creating healthy habits

Good nutrition is key to your child's health both now and in the future. Eating habits learnt through childhood usually continue into adulthood- so try to help your child develop a healthy relationship with food from an early age. It is common for children to reject new foods but repeated exposure to different foods within a short timeframe most often leads to better acceptance of the new foods. Early introduction to a variety of textures and tastes also plays an important role in the development of children's speech, and for healthy teeth.

Here are some tips to help you and your family create healthy habits for life

Promote healthy eating in your home

- Make sure that healthy foods can be found in your home
- Limit unhealthy foods in the home so that you don't have to 'police' what your children eat.
- Be a role model and show your children that you enjoy eating healthy foods too!
- Try growing some vegetables, herbs or fruit at home

Establish healthy eating routines

Healthy eating isn't only about choosing healthy foods; it's also about eating regularly and in a social way. It's important to:

- Eat breakfast every day
- Eat regularly throughout the day
- Eat meals as a family at the table rather than in front of the TV
- Drink only water at family mealtimes
- Cook more meals at home and get the kids involved with preparing, cooking and serving food.

Create positive mealtime experiences

Mealtimes provide an opportunity for children to develop good eating habits, learn about nutrition and food variety, and for parents and children to enjoy some time together.

Expect a little mess when children are eating and try not to get angry or upset – remember making mess with food is all part of experimenting with different tastes and textures.

Parents should decide on the types of food made available at mealtimes and either serve individual portions to each family member or place bowls or platters on the table where everyone can help themselves. Allowing children to decide on how much food they want to eat helps them to eat according to their appetite and to learn to respond to their body's hunger and fullness signals.

I'm Having a Rainbow for Dinner

Parents Notes

Food Foundations • an NAQ Nutrition program

Buying in season vegetables and fruit

Healthy food does not need to be expensive. Buying vegetables and fruits in season is a great way to reduce food costs and ensures that you are getting maximum nutrients from your food as it has not been sitting in cold rooms for months on end.

Visiting Farmers markets or forming a vegetable co-op can be great ways to find good quality fruit and vegetables at lower cost.

For more information on "What's in Season" visit:

[http://www.brisbanemarkets.com.au/publications/fruit-and-vegetable-seasonal-guides/.](http://www.brisbanemarkets.com.au/publications/fruit-and-vegetable-seasonal-guides/)