

Proper Diet

Unfortunately, the majority of children and adults in our country do not eat a properly balanced diet. Just as we enforce rules such as not playing in the street or biting, we should do the same with our child's eating habits. Parents have **100%** control over what their children eat when they are young, however, they rarely utilize it. The sooner a structured meal program is started, the easier will be the process. Long term eating habits are formulated during childhood and they **rarely** change as we get older.

Outline

1) milk and milk products

Intake Goal:

- 1 to 3 years old - 16 to 20 ounces
- 3 to 9 years old - 24 to 28 ounces
- 9 to 19 years old - 36 ounces
- >19 years old - 28 ounces

Equivalent Conversions:

- 1 slice of American cheese equals 4 oz. of milk
- 1 piece of sting cheese equals 6 oz. of milk
- 1 oz. of yogurt equals 1 oz. of milk

Fat Content:

- full fat from 1 to 2 years old
- non fat after 2 years old except use low fat cheeses

- 2) Minimize juice, regular pop, and Gatorade. Use of unsweetened Kool-Aid or sun tea, Crystal Lite, or **water** are better choices. 100% juice is 100% junk food - eating an apple is a much better choice than just consuming the "sugar water".
- 3) Give at least 8 ounces of water containing fluoride per day for the teeth and bones. A **small** amount of juice or food coloring may be added to improve acceptance by the child.
- 4) Give a multivitamin with iron every day. This is necessary because, even in the best of situations, the child's diet won't be perfect.
- 5) Make a list of 5 fruits and 5 vegetables.
 - watermelon and iceberg lettuce don't count since they are mainly water with minimal nutritional value
 - potatoes and corn are counted as starches/breads, not as vegetables
 - consider alternatives such as:
 - a) raw baby carrots or cauliflower
 - b) French cut green beans instead of regular style
 - c) cucumbers
 - d) canned fruit in light syrup - pour off the syrup and rinse the fruit prior to serving
 - don't exclude a food just because you don't like it or because it is not one of the typical foods you would expect a child to eat (e.g. asparagus). Children's taste preferences are constantly developing and regular trials of an item will usually end in success.
- 6) At each meal, put a **bite** of each item (fruit, vegetable, meat, bread) on the plate and set a timer for 30 minutes.
- 7) Second helpings are not to be provided until everything on the plate has been eaten. Additional servings are also limited to bite size portions.
- 8) Once the timer goes off, the table is cleared even if your child has just begun to eat.
- 9) Until your child is eating properly on a regular basis, nothing is given between meals except for water. This includes during the middle of the night when your child is unable to sleep.
- 10) Once good eating habits are established, fruits and vegetables can be given as between meal snacks.
- 11) Minimize the frequently employed habit of using starches (e.g. Cheerios) as a way to keep your child occupied or fed while you run errands.
- 11) Frequent small meals are in fact healthier than 2 or 3 large meals per day. It is just harder to keep track of what was eaten to ensure the appropriate food category balance was achieved.

- 12) Each food should be limited to no more than 3 times per week so as to ensure adequate variety.
- 13) Junk food should be limited to 1 time per day and offered only if your child is eating properly.
Periodic snacks are important so your child learns their appropriate place in a balanced diet.
Remember to use appropriate portion sizes (e.g. 2 or 3 cookies instead of 5).
- 14) If your child does not eat for a few days, they may become very hungry which will encourage them to eat what is offered. **They will not starve.**
- 15) Focus on diet **balance** and not quantity. Children are better at self regulating than adults. They eat because they are hungry, not just because it is lunch time. In our society where there is a heavy intake of starches and meats, an emphasis on fruits and vegetables is more likely to achieve the desired balance.
- 16) Avoid the temptation to give into your child's crying and screaming. These are just a form of a temper tantrum and a way for them to express their unhappiness. **If you stick to your guns,** meal time should be easier within 3 to 7 days.

We encourage you to call us during business hours if you have any questions or problems.