

eDiet and Trim Kids

Top 10 tips for Improving Nutrition and Fitness at Home and in School

NUTRITION

1. Discourage eating in front of the TV or computer by establishing family dinners on the weekend and gradually during the week. Gradually restrict all eating and drinking (except water) to the kitchen counter, table or dining room.
2. In the home display healthy snacks like fruits and vegetables in easy to reach areas. Include healthy snacks like carrots, grapes, wheat crackers, string cheese and cucumber slices in school lunch bags.
3. Give your children water when they are thirsty, not high sugar beverages such as sodas. Include bottled water in school lunch bags.
4. At the grocery store, have children select one fruit and vegetable to try each week and skip the candy, cookie and soda aisle. At home include children in lunch and dinner preparation.
5. When grocery shopping, purchase foods with ≤ 5 grams of fat and/or 15 of sugar and teach children how to read food labels.
6. Serve children an appropriate portion size (usually $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of each food prepared. Children will eat more if you serve them more.
7. Encourage at least 3 bites of each food on the plate. Be sure to “grade” new veggies as an A-great, B-good, C-so-so, D-ugh!, F-no way! And serve high scoring veggies again and often.
8. *Gradually* reduce fast food consumption to less than one time per week and allow infrequent consumption of non-nutritious foods away from the home.
9. After 8 is too late. Discourage snacking after dinner so children will be hungry when they wake up. Plan breakfast the night before and make it attractive.
10. Teach children that it’s ok to leave food on their plate so they will learn to self-regulate and not over eat.
11. Try baked instead of fried chips; or try frozen yogurt instead of ice cream. (To switch to 2% milk; mix whole milk with 2% the first week to make the change easier!)
12. When your child selects an unhealthy snack, re-direct and give choices: Do you want strawberries, carrots or melon for you snack?
13. Attend school parent-teacher association meetings and advocate for healthy options in vending machines and more fruits and veggies in school lunch.

14. Encourage your child's teachers to give physical activity supplies or active play breaks instead of candy as rewards for academic accomplishment or positive behavior
15. When it's your turn to bring the class snack, try fresh fruit with low fat yogurt dip, air-popped popcorn, flavored rice cakes or cut up veggies with low fat salad dressing, low fat cream cheese or peanut butter.

FITNESS

1. Discourage TV and computer time by turning on the stereo when you get home. (Teach your child to cha cha, tango or waltz or let them teach you the latest dance craze).
2. Let children do something active and FUN when they get home from school, **before homework**, like riding bikes, walking the dog, skating , dancing to their favorite songs or playing tag outside. Afterwards they'll concentrate better on their studies.
3. Create a physical activity center with safe, indoor active toys and games in the corner of the family room. Call it an imagination station and include scarves, hats, and old dress up clothes.
4. Let your children try a variety of activities such as sports, dance, martial arts or swimming in a safe and encouraging program. They'll also make friends with other active kids!
5. Insist that your children take a 5-minute break every 30 minutes of TV, computer and even homework! Encourage teachers to implement the same rule in the classroom.
6. Encourage your children to dance or stretch during TV commercials.
7. Active parents have active children. Increase weekend physical activity by filling a tub with balls, jump ropes, skates and yard games. Go for a family bike ride, hike or fly kites.
8. Young children are best suited for short bursts of intermittent active play—like tag--- so be careful not to impose adult exercise goals, programs or equipment.
9. Let young children safely climb, run and jump to help develop muscle strength and bone density. Do strength training together with your older children.
10. When your child is vegging out in front of the tube, redirect and give choices: Would you like to go outside and play, rake leaves or tidy your room? If you let him, he will play!
11. Attend school parent-teacher association meetings and advocate for daily physical education class and active outdoor playtime (recess) twice daily.

12. Actively participate with your children in school fitness functions such as fun-runs, skating parties, and field days.

The Ultimate Parent Tip: Stop the nagging. Don't draw attention to negative behaviors. Rather, spend your energy praising your child when he chooses healthy foods or physical activity.