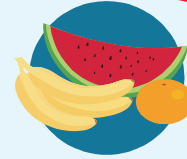




Healthy Home Food Environment



Your home can be a place where “making the healthy choice is the easy choice”. As gatekeepers of food in the home, parents influence food choices as role models and as food providers. Studies show parents' intake of high calorie fluids, sweet or savory snacks and fast food is associated with what their children eat.

If healthy foods and beverages are available and offered, that’s what children learn to eat and enjoy. Parents can make their home environments “health promotion centers”.

Encouraging A Healthy Nutrition Environment

Begin at the Supermarket: Purchase foods that promote the health of your family. There aren't “good foods and bad foods”, but there are ones that promote health, and ones that contribute to disease.



Think Your Drink: Consider skim or 1% milk, 100% fruit juice, water and other calorie free drinks as the main beverages you provide at home. Milk contains important nutrients like calcium and vitamin D. Drinking water to quench thirst can become a life-long healthy habit. Eat fruits and vegetables rather than rely on juices to maximize nutrients and fiber intake!

Make Healthy Choices Visible and Accessible: Do the foods you see when you open your cupboards and refrigerator promote health? Or are they mainly sources of extra calories and little nutrition? Over time, restock your kitchen and pantry with foods that promote health.



Portion Family Meals: Pre-portion servings appropriate for each family member. There is less likelihood for over-eating if excess foods aren't on their plates or the table.

Eat at Home: You'll enjoy healthier meals, often lower in fat, added sugar and sodium than many meals you may eat away from home. Cooking together is a practical approach to teach this life skill. And eating with your family promotes children's academic growth and social skills.



Separate Caretaking from Feeding: We commonly show our love through food. But there are many ways to show your family that you care for them, beyond feeding. Can you make mealtime conversation at least as important as the foods you prepare?

Use Non-food Rewards: Shifting the focus away from food may help your children establish patterns to help them control their weight later in life. And you might find that it helps you, too.



Walk the Talk: Children are great imitators and friends can be influenced by our positive approach to the home environment.

References: nature.com/oby/journal/, wslifestyles.com, ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/ & yaleruddcenter.org/

