

HEALTHY HABITS for the Family

Leading a healthier lifestyle should include the whole family! Making changes on your own can feel lonely and be hard to sustain. Involving the family means everyone can help each other out and making changes can become a family bonding experience. How can you include your family?

1. Include the kids in the grocery shopping experience
 - A. Have the kids pick out a new vegetable or other whole food they want to try that week
 - B. Let kids choose the produce. For example, you want 4 apples for the week, so let them pick those 4 apples and teach them how to choose the best options.
 - C. Have them help you write the grocery list
2. Have everyone help with cooking to get them invested in the meal.
Kids at any age can help with different stages in the cooking process:

Ages	Skills
3 to 5	Wash produce, pick leaves from herbs, use cookie cutters, mix simple ingredients
6 to 7	Crack eggs, peel vegetables, tear lettuce leaves, and set the table
8 to 9	Measure and mix dry ingredients, use can opener, beat eggs, and make sandwiches
10 to 12	Follow a step-by-step recipe, slice vegetables, boil pasta, microwave foods

3. Prepare one meal that everyone eats.
 - A. Every family has a picky eater but preparing unique meals can add stress and time to cooking foods.
 - B. Keep in mind, children may not want to eat everything you cook or finish their plate, and that is okay.
 - C. Get feedback from your kids to understand why they may not like their food and help them describe why they don't like a food. For example, if your child says the "brussel sprouts are gross," ask why? Ask more questions to see why they don't like the food. Do they not like the Brussels sprouts because they are bitter, their texture, or just their color? This way you can have a conversation with them about the food they are eating and make changes to how you cook it in the future.



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Patient Educational Handout



Think about the foods everyone enjoys and try cooking other vegetables in similar ways. For example, if your family likes mashed potatoes, try mashed sweet potato. Fill out the table below to see different vegetables your family can add to their diet. Consider looking at the 'All About Carbohydrates' handout for some additional ideas about healthy swaps.

Vegetables your family already likes (write the type of vegetable and how you may cook them)	New vegetable with a similar cooking method or seasonings
Example: Roasted Carrots	Roasted Beets

4. Eat meals together. Sit down together and spend time eating and talking. Here, kids can see their parents eating foods they may not like and can copy their behavior. Kids repeat what you do, so it's important for you to model healthy habits.



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