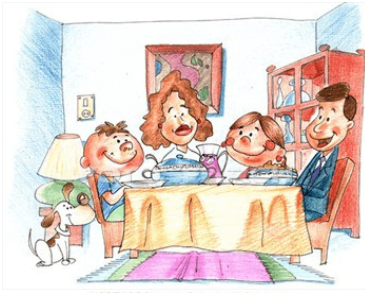


Healthy & Fit

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Healthy Eating

Whether you have a toddler or a teen, here are five of the best strategies to improve nutrition and encourage smart

eating habits;

Have regular family meals.

Serve a variety of healthy foods and snacks.

Be a role model by eating healthy yourself.

Avoid battles over food.

Involve kids in the process.

But it's not easy when everyone is juggling busy schedules and convenience food, such as fast food, is so readily available.

Here are some ways to incorporate all five strategies into your routine.

Family Meals

Family meals are a comforting ritual for both parents and kids. Children like the predictability of family meals and parents get a chance to catch up with their kids. Kids who take part in regular family meals are also:

more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and grains

less likely to snack on unhealthy foods

less likely to smoke, use marijuana, or drink alcohol

In addition, family meals offer the chance to

introduce kids to new foods and to act as a role model for healthy eating.

Teens may turn up their noses at the prospect of a family meal — not surprising because they're busy and want to be more independent. Yet studies find that teens still want their parents' advice and counsel, so use mealtime as a chance to reconnect.

Also, consider trying these strategies:

Allow your teen to invite a friend to dinner.

Involve your teen in meal planning and preparation.

Keep mealtime calm and congenial — no lectures or arguing.

What counts as a family meal? Any time you and your family eat together — whether it's takeout food or a home-cooked meal with all the trimmings. Strive for nutritious food and a time when everyone can be there. This may mean eating dinner a little later to accommodate a child who's at sports practice. It can also mean setting aside time on the weekends, such as Sunday brunch, when it may be more convenient to gather as a group

How to Be a Role Model

The best way for you to encourage healthy eating is to eat well yourself. Kids will follow the lead of the adults they see every day. By eating fruits and vegetables and not overindulging in the less nutritious stuff, you'll be sending the right message.

Another way to be a good role model is to serve appropriate portions and not overeat. Parents who are always dieting or complaining about their bodies may foster these same negative feelings in their kids. Try to keep a positive approach about food.

About RSV

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which causes infection of the lungs and breathing passages, is a major cause of respiratory illness in young children.

In adults, it may only produce symptoms of a common cold, such as a stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, mild headache, cough, fever, and a general feeling of being ill. But in premature babies and kids with diseases that affect the lungs, heart, or immune system, RSV infections can lead to other more serious illnesses.

RSV is highly contagious and can be spread through droplets containing the virus when someone coughs or sneezes. It also can live on surfaces (such as countertops or doorknobs) and on hands and clothing, so it can be easily spread when a person touches something contaminated.

RSV can spread rapidly through schools and childcare centers. Babies often get it when older kids carry the virus home from school and pass it to them. Almost all kids are infected with RSV at least once by the time they're 2 years old.

RSV infections often occur in epidemics that last from late fall through early spring. Respiratory illness caused by RSV — such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia — usually lasts about a week, but some cases may last several weeks.

Doctors typically diagnose RSV by taking a medical history and doing a physical exam. Generally, in healthy kids it's not necessary to distinguish RSV from a common cold. But if a child has other health conditions, a doctor might want to make a specific diagnosis; in that case, RSV is identified in nasal secretions collected either with a cotton swab or by suction through a bulb syringe.

Preventing RSV

Because RSV can be easily spread by touching infected people or surfaces, frequent hand washing is key in preventing its transmission. Try to wash your hands after having any contact with someone who has cold symptoms. And keep your school-age child with a cold away from younger siblings — particularly infants — until the symptoms pass.

To prevent serious RSV-related respiratory disease, at-risk infants can be given a monthly injection of a

medication consisting of RSV antibodies during peak RSV season (roughly November to April). Because its protection is short-lived, it has to be given in subsequent years until the child is no longer at high risk for severe RSV infection. Ask the doctor if your child is considered high risk.

Treating RSV

Fortunately, most cases of RSV are mild and require no specific treatment from doctors. Antibiotics aren't used because RSV is a virus and antibiotics are only effective against bacteria. Medication may sometimes be given to help open airways.

In an infant, however, an RSV infection can be more serious and may require hospitalization so that the baby can be watched closely. He or she may require fluids and possibly treatment for breathing problems.

At home, make a child with an RSV infection as comfortable as possible, allow time for recovery, and provide plenty of fluids. The last part can be tricky, however, because babies may not feel like drinking. In that case, offer fluids in small amounts at more frequent intervals than usual.

To help your child breathe easier, use a cool-mist vaporizer during the winter months to keep the air moist — winter air can dry out airways and make the mucus stickier. Avoid hot-water and steam humidifiers, which can be hazardous and can cause scalding. If you use a cool-mist humidifier, clean it daily with household bleach to discourage mold.

If your child is uncomfortable and too young to blow his or her own nose, use a nasal aspirator (or bulb syringe) to remove sticky nasal fluids.

Treat fever using a nonaspirin fever medicine like acetaminophen. Aspirin should **not** be used in children with viral illnesses, as such use has been associated with Reye syndrome, a *life-threatening illness*.

