Children need to eat a variety of healthy foods each day to help them do their very best at school. Here are answers to important questions you may have about your child’s nutrition.

**How can our family eat healthy meals together when we are so busy?**
- Make food preparation and cooking a family activity.
- Eat different meals together. For example, eat breakfast together one day and lunch or dinner the next.
- Buy healthy ready-to-eat foods from the store or healthy take-out foods from a restaurant.

**How can I get my child to eat breakfast?**
- Provide foods that are fast and convenient, such as bagels, low-fat granola bars, fruits, 100% fruit juice, and yogurt.
- Serve foods other than the usual breakfast foods (for example, sandwiches, baked potatoes, and leftovers such as chicken or pasta).
- Help your child get organized so that she has time to eat in the morning.
- Make breakfast the night before.
- If your child is in a hurry, offer her foods such as fruits or trail mix to eat at school.

**How can I get my child to eat more fruits and vegetables?**
- Keep a variety of fruits and vegetables at home.
- Keep 100% fruit juice in the refrigerator.
- Wash and cut up fruits and vegetables and keep them in the refrigerator, along with low-fat dip or salsa. Use a clear container so that the fruits and vegetables can be seen easily.
- Serve two or more vegetables with dinner, including at least one your child likes. Serve a salad with a choice of low-fat dressing.
- Pack fruits (including 100% fruit juice) and vegetables in your child’s bag to eat at school.
- Be a good role model—eat more fruits and vegetables yourself.

**My child snacks on chips and candy. What should I do?**
- Limit foods that are high in fat, such as potato chips that are fried, and foods that are high in sugar, such as candy and soft drinks.
- Serve healthy foods, such as pretzels, baked potato chips, low-fat granola bars, popcorn, 100% fruit juice, fruits, apple sauce, vegetables, and yogurt.
- Keep a bowl of fruit on the kitchen table or counter.
How can I help my child get enough calcium?

• Serve foods that are rich in calcium, such as low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, tofu processed with calcium sulfate, broccoli, and collard and turnip greens.
• Serve flavored milk, such as chocolate or strawberry.
• Use low-fat dairy products in recipes, such as in puddings, milkshakes, soups, and casseroles.
• Serve unusual dairy products, such as new flavors of yogurt.
• If your child’s digestive system cannot handle milk and other dairy products (he is lactose intolerant), try these suggestions:
  – Serve small portions of these foods throughout the day.
  – Serve these foods along with non-dairy foods.
  – Serve lactose-free dairy products, yogurt, and aged hard cheeses, such as Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, and Parmesan, that are low in lactose.
  – Give your child lactase tablets before he eats dairy products containing lactose.
  – Add lactose drops to your child’s milk.
  – Serve foods, such as orange juice and cereal products, with added calcium (calcium-fortified).
• If these ideas do not work, ask a health professional about giving your child a calcium supplement.

How can I help my child be more active?

• Encourage active, spur-of-the-moment physical activity, such as playing tag or hide and seek.
• Limit the time your child spends watching TV and videotapes and playing computer games to 1 or 2 hours per day.
• Give your child chores, such as raking leaves or walking the dog.
• Make physical activity a part of your child’s daily life. For example, use the stairs instead of taking an elevator or escalator.
• Participate in physical activity together, such as playing ball or going biking or skating. It is a great way to spend time with your child.
• Enroll your child in planned physical activities, such as swimming, martial arts, or dancing.
• Work with your community to make sure that your child has safe places for being physically active, such as walking and biking paths, playgrounds, and parks.
• Be a good role model—participate in regular physical activity yourself.

Notes

This fact sheet contains general information and is not a substitute for talking with your child’s health professional about your particular concerns about your child.