

## Healthy Kid Friendly Food

As parents, we know that nutritious food is very important for our child's growth, development and overall health. What we may not realize is that food affects school performance, attention, hyperactivity, prevention of infection and allergies, and a risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis and heart disease. Parent food choices and behaviors dramatically influence their child's food choices and behaviors in the future. Emphasis on nutritious whole foods in addition to positive attitudes and behaviors is key for successful kid nutrition, the earlier the better!

### **Tips:**

- Create positive rituals around healthy food.
  - Have supper together at the table most or all nights of the week.
  - Shop together at the grocery store and have children pick out one or more vegetables to try. This way you can discover new foods together.
  - Do the same thing to find new healthy recipes. Get a few healthy whole foods cookbooks and find new recipes together.
  - Pick a day of the week where the kid(s) help make a healthy meal of their choice.  
Give them three or four options to choose from.
- Demonstrate positive behaviors around food.
  - Choose healthy options yourself. Children watch parent behavior closely!
  - Do not obsess or lament about weight gain, or looking fat.
  - Limit snacking or eating meals while distracted, especially in front of the TV.
  - Carefully read labels and look for whole healthy ingredients.
  - Don't be fanatical about healthy or unhealthy food. If there is too much restriction or focus on "health" children will rebel and dismiss the "healthy" information. Balance is key.
  - Do not encourage cleaning the plate, encourage becoming familiar with the body's inherent hunger/full signals.
  - Avoid using dessert as a reward or comfort. Dessert should be saved for special occasions and not used to make one feel better.
  - Practice portion control (not obsessively) and eating in a slow relaxed manner.

## Healthy food options

There is much confusion about what constitutes nutritious food; many junk foods are disguised as “healthy” options.

- As a general rule, determine how close the food item is to how it was grown and intended by nature.
  - Is it a whole food or processed food?
  - Did this food grow from nature or was it made by a factory?
  - Examples:
    - Corn on the cob vs. corn puffs or corn chips.
    - Wheat berries vs. cereals, breads, crackers with wheat flour.
    - Blueberries vs. blueberry “fruit” snacks.
    - Plain yogurt vs. frozen yogurt dessert.
    - **100%** whole grain flours vs. “wheat” flour.
- Avoid added sugars as much as possible. Read ingredients!
  - Fructose, corn syrup, maltose, dextrose, lactose, juice or fruit concentrate, cane, beet sugar, honey, brown rice syrup and maple syrup are all forms of sugar that may be added.
  - Best sweet choices
    1. Stevia
    2. Monk Fruit
    3. Raw Honey – after age one.
    4. Maple syrup
    5. Molasses
- Avoid trans fats. Read ingredients – zero trans fat on the label isn’t always so!
  - This includes
    - Partially hydrogenated oil.
    - Crisco.
    - Margarine.
    - Fried food.
    - Many commercial cookies, crackers, pastries, pie crusts.
- Add puréed veggies to common foods. (1/4 cup usually works, play with amounts)
  - Cooked and pureed butternut squash to Mac n Cheese.
  - Cooked and pureed spinach to brownies, blueberries too!
  - Cooked and pureed mushrooms and carrots to pasta and pizza sauce.
  - Cooked and pureed lentils to hamburger patties or meat loaf.
  - Cooked and pureed white beans in tuna salad.
  - Can you think of any more... get creative and test it!
  - Buy [The Sneaky Chef](#) cookbook

## Nutritious Snack Ideas

- Hummus dip with 100% whole grain or grain free crackers.
- Black bean dip (puree beans with plain yogurt) with red pepper and jicama strips.
- Refried beans, mozzarella cheese, salsa and 100% whole grain or grain free tortilla.
- Carrots and homemade ranch dressing (ranch seasoning packet and plain yogurt).
- Plain yogurt sweetened with monk fruit and pureed or whole berries.
- Smoothie: 1 cup plain yogurt or plant based protein powder, ½ cup almond milk, honey, banana and strawberries. Add 1 T. of ground flax seeds for brain boosting omega 3's!
- Celery, almond butter and raisins.
- Tomato slices with fresh mozzarella cheese, basil.
- Make your own trail mix: raw almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, raisins, apricots, dark chocolate chips, sunflower seeds, Forager or Love Grown cereal
- Cherry tomatoes, grapes, and chunks of organic, nitrate free lunch meat on toothpicks.
- Flax 4 Life muffins.
- Cucumber slices, sugar snap peas and white bean dip (pureed white beans with tahini, sesame seed butter, and plain yogurt).
- Late July multi grain flax Chips with salsa.
- Organic, nitrate free turkey slices rolled with spinach and grass fed cheese.
- Hard boiled egg.
- Chopped melon with pistachios.
- Nancy's cottage cheese and pineapple chunks.
- Dried figs, dates and goat cheese or chunks of skim mozzarella.
- Garlic toast with pasta sauce (Dave's Killer bread toasted, cut in strips, with grass-fed ghee and sprinkled with fresh or powdered garlic and dipped in warm pasta sauce (check for added sugar).
- Whole food bars: Look for real ingredients!
  - MacroLife bar
  - Whenever Bar
  - RX Bar
  - Munk Pack Bar
  - IQ Bar
  - Greens + Bar
  - Lara Bar
  - Kind Bars
  - Optimum Bars
  - Cliff Bars