



MISSION: Healthy Kids

3-2-1-0: Blast off to a healthier summer

Summer is filled with fun, festivities, vacation and food! It may feel hard enough to keep your own healthy eating in check, much less worrying about your kids' too. Throw in a long break with a less structured schedule, and healthy habits can often feel sidelined. Here are some tips to stay on track:

Focus on fun rather than food

Make memories for your children that will last for a lifetime but that won't instill habits that detract from good health. Create non-food traditions for your family — like decorating for the Fourth of July, and attending community concerts. If you focus more on fun, it's easier to focus less on food.

Plan out healthy snacks

Stock up on fruit, vegetables, string cheese and yogurt for easy, healthy snacks. Plan to give kids a snack whenever meals are more than four hours apart. Enlist your kids' help in finding healthy snack recipes.

Try seasonal fruits and vegetables

Many fresh fruits and vegetables are in prime season in summer. Introduce your kids to new fruits and vegetables like unusual melons, heirloom tomatoes, snap peas and other seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Talk about trade-offs and moderation

Don't cut sweet treats out entirely; but do limit them. Talk about saving sweets for special times, and enlist your kids in keeping track of what they have eaten to help them be mindful. Steer them to make decisions like having a small piece of dessert now, and sharing the rest or saving it for another day.

Keep moving

Keep active with your kids to burn off those extra picnic calories and stay fit. When weather permits, go for a walk or to the park. If you are stuck indoors, make a game out of running in place or playing a few rounds of a fitness or dance video game. Short, 10-minute fitness breaks do make a difference.

Stay on schedule when possible

Try to serve small healthy meals at the regular time each day regardless of your party schedule. Then, when you go to a party, you and your kids won't feel starving, which can lead to overeating. Make sure everyone is getting enough sleep, and try to avoid late nights that throw younger kids off of their regular schedule.

Celebrate; don't stress

When it really is party time, relax a little. Enjoy the foods that make the season special. If your child has generally been eating well all year long, a few splurges along the way are okay.

missionhealthykids.org

Mission: Healthy Kids raises awareness about the impact of nutrition and physical activity on kids' physical development, ability to learn and emotional well-being. It promotes policy, systems, and environmental changes in Wisconsin schools that improve health, and it offers resources for students, parents and educators to help kids eat right and stay active.

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