

Healthy Eating

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text centered on a white background.

Start them young

- ▶ Food preferences are developed early in life, so offer variety.
- ▶ Likes and dislikes begin forming even when children are babies.
- ▶ You may need to serve a new food a few different times for a child to accept it.
- ▶ Don't force a child to eat, but offer a few bites. With older children, ask them to try one bite.

Parents control the supply lines

- ▶ You decide which foods to buy and when to serve them.
- ▶ Children may pester parents for less nutritious foods.
- ▶ If their favorite snack isn't all that nutritious, you can still buy it once in a while.

Children can choose.....

- ▶ Involve your child in shopping both online and in store (this is a great opportunity for discussing healthy options).
- ▶ Children should always know what they are having for lunch and snack.
- ▶ Children should know which lunch box and snack boxes are theirs (name them please).
- ▶ It's all about the pots and packaging, which is one of the reasons that convenience/packaged foods and snacks always win children over. Use small containers and pots or the lunch boxes with the separate compartments.
- ▶ These can really help picky eaters, as they can have a mezze style lunch, eating a wide variety of foods making it fun for them.

Healthy and happy

- ▶ Choose variety – the best meals have a balance of items from different food groups.
- ▶ According to *NHS choices* a balanced lunchbox should contain:
 - Starchy foods like bread, rice, potatoes or pasta
 - Protein foods like meat, fish, eggs or beans
 - A dairy item, like cheese or yoghurt
 - Vegetables or salad and a portion of fruit

“Me” sized portions

How Much Should Children Eat?



- Get your child to make a fist. This is how many carbohydrates the children should have on their plate.



- Let your child open their hand so it is flat. The palm of their hand is how much protein the children should have.



- Get your child to make a claw shape with their hand. This is how many vegetables should be on their plate.

Tips & tricks

- ▶ Several small things are better than one large one e.g. a sandwich made with one slice of bread, cheese portion, veg sticks, child sized yogurt.
- ▶ Cut up sandwiches, fruit and veg into child sized pieces
- ▶ If your child is not keen on crusts then cut into triangles so there is only one crust per side OR
- ▶ Find alternatives such as wraps, pitta bread.
- ▶ Do not give your child something new to try at school - young children's tastes develop over time. If you introduce something new at home and they do not like it, try again a couple of months later.
- ▶ Batch cook and freeze e.g. pasta, noodle dishes etc. and heat up before school.

Fruit & vegetables

- ▶ Fruits are an important part of a balanced diet. They contain necessary nutrients like vitamin C, potassium, and fibre. You can use fresh, frozen, or canned fruit.
- ▶ When buying canned fruit, choose fruit that is packed in juice rather than sugary syrup.
- ▶ It's best to serve whole fruit over 100% fruit juice or smoothies. Fruit juices have more sugar and calories with less fibre per serving than whole fruit.
- ▶ Vegetables have many of the vitamins and minerals children need for good health, are naturally low in calories, and contain fibre.

Protein

- ▶ Foods that are high in protein help the body build and maintain the tissues of the body. They also have important vitamins and minerals, like iron.
- ▶ Protein-rich foods include beef, poultry, seafood, dry beans and peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds. Soy products like tofu and veggie burgers are also good sources of protein. When eating meats, choose lean or low-fat options.

Carbohydrates - whole grains

- ▶ This group includes any food made from wheat, oats, cornmeal, barley, or other grain. Bread, tortillas, cereal, rice, and pasta belong in this group.
- ▶ At least half of the grains children eat each day should be whole grains, such as oatmeal, brown rice, and whole wheat bread. Whole grains have dietary fibre that helps you feel full and can prevent and treat constipation.

Dairy food

- ▶ This group includes milk and other dairy products, such as yoghurt and cheese. Calcium-fortified soy milk is also included in the dairy group.
- ▶ Besides calcium, dairy products have vitamin D. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium for healthy bones and teeth.
- ▶ Butter, cream, and cream cheese, don't have much calcium.

Drink calories count

- ▶ Fizzy and other sweetened drinks add extra calories and get in the way of good nutrition.
- ▶ Water and milk are the best drinks for children.
- ▶ 100% juice is fine but not too much. 4 to 6 ounces a day is enough for children aged 1 - 3 and 8 ounces for children aged 7+.

Put sweets in their place

- ▶ Occasional sweets are fine, but don't turn dessert into the main reason for eating a meal.
- ▶ When dessert is the prize for eating a meal, children naturally place more value on the cupcake than the broccoli.
- ▶ Try to stay neutral about foods.

Quit the "clean-plate club."

- ▶ Let children stop eating when they feel they've had enough.
- ▶ Lots of parents grew up under the clean-plate rule, but that approach doesn't help children listen to their own bodies when they feel full.
- ▶ When children notice and respond to feelings of fullness, they're less likely to overeat.

Children do as you do

- ▶ Be a role model and eat healthy food yourself.
- ▶ When trying to teach good eating habits, try to set the best example possible.
- ▶ Choose nutritious snacks, eat at the table, and don't skip meals.

Health implications

- ▶ **Strong evidence shows that a poor diet can cause -**
- ▶ Low energy levels/fatigue/poor concentration
- ▶ Depression/Anxiety/Stress
- ▶ Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- ▶ Alzheimer's Disease/Dementia
- ▶ Heart Disease
- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ Sleep Apnea
- ▶ Respiratory Problems/Asthma
- ▶ Certain types of cancer
- ▶ Liver disease
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Tooth decay

Lunch box ideas

- ▶ www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes
(NHS)
- ▶ <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/lunchbox>
(BBC)
- ▶ <https://realfood.com/search/html?Collection=kINDS%27%20lunchbox>
(Tesco)
- ▶ <http://childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/wp/>
(Children's Food Trust)