

Do I Have To Eat That?

Be a healthy role model for your child

You are the most important influence on your child.

You can do many things to help your child develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!



Be a good role model

Eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Your child will see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

Create success

Help your child be successful with eating. Keep portions small; they can always ask for more. Let your child choose and serve their own food at mealtime. Let your child help with setting the table and cleaning up.

Get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters, or name a food your child helps make, "Janie's Salad." Make your own trail mixes from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal, nuts and dried fruit.

Listen to your child

If your child says she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack – even if it is not a scheduled time to eat. Give choices. Ask "Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or carrots? Instead of "Do you want broccoli for dinner?"

Focus on each other at the table

Eating together as a family is very important to a child's attitude about food. Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later. Try to make meals a stress-free time.

Reward with attention, not food

Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. A sweet reward lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. Show your love with hugs and kisses, read a story, or take a trip to the park.

Do I Have To Eat That?

Encourage physical activity

Make exercise fun for the whole family. Involve your child in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child instead of sitting on the sidelines. Allow no more than 2 hours of TV, computer or video games a day, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Buy foods you want your family to eat

Have your family choose healthy foods to buy when you go grocery shopping. Buy only healthy foods to have at home. Saying no to foods can make them seem more appealing. Instead, don't have them available.

Keep a regular meal time

Offer your child three small meals and snacks during the day. Limit large amounts of milk, juice or other beverages between meals, since your child may not be hungry for meals.

Show by example

Try new foods yourself. Describe their taste, texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time at the beginning of a meal, when your child is hungry. It may take several times before a child tastes a food and a few more before he likes it. Serve something your child likes along with the new food.

Appetites vary

It is normal for a child's appetite to vary. One day he eats everything in sight and the next he eats very little. Respect your child; show him you won't make him eat when he isn't hungry.

Go food shopping together

Grocery shopping can teach your child about foods. Discuss where fruits, vegetables, grains, milk, and meats come from. Let your child make healthy choices.



Want to learn more?

Contact the Nutrition Connections staff in your county.

Belknap 527-5475

Carroll 447-3834

Cheshire 352-4550

Coos 788-4961

Grafton 536-3720



Hillsborough 641-6060

Merrimack 796-2151

Rockingham 679-5616

Strafford 749-4445

Sullivan 863-9200