Healthy Eating and Active Living for Your Six to Twelve Year Old

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Creating Healthy Places and Spaces

Your child plays, eats, and learns in your home, at school, in after school-care, and in the community. All these places and spaces are important in your child’s life. They are where your child learns the habits of healthy eating and active living. They are also the places that help your child develop a positive self-image.

Home places and spaces

In a busy life, it’s hard to find time to make and eat healthy meals. It’s also hard to find time to be physically active. Yet healthy eating and regular physical activity are important for all the family.

What can YOU do at home?

Home is the place where your child first learns the habits of healthy eating and active living. You can help your child by making these good habits a routine for everyone. Plan your routines so that making the healthy choice is the easy choice. Then it becomes a natural part of everyday life.

• Make healthy foods the easiest choice by having them in the fridge and cupboards.
• Make eating breakfast together a daily routine. Breakfast gives you and your child energy for the day’s work and play.
• Use time together at meals to plan activities that get the family moving.
• Encourage activities that get your child moving. They can be simple things like taking the garbage out or walking the dog.
• Eat supper together. It’s a great way for the family to stay connected.
• Plan sports or other family activities. Then there’ll be less time for TV, computer, and video games.
• Make sure your child gets enough sleep. Sleep gives energy for learning and play.

The media and your child

Television, magazines, movies, billboards, advertisements, comics, and the Internet:

• A lot of advertising is aimed at children. The advertising may be for a product. Or it may be a buried message in a TV show, magazine, comic, etc. Often these messages don’t encourage healthy eating, or active living, or a positive self-image.
• Talk with your child about what the media tells them.
School places and spaces

Your child spends a large part of their day at school. In the classroom they’re taught about healthy eating and active living. Do the food and activity choices in the school match what your child is learning?

• Healthy food choices should be available in all places in school. Canteens, cafeterias, and vending machines should all offer healthy choices. Food in staff rooms and snack boxes should be healthy too.
• Be a role model. Provide healthy foods for classroom parties, staff meetings and fund raising events. Put healthy foods in snacks.
• The school needs to be a place where your child has opportunities to be active. Children need to have chances to move about at recess and class breaks. They need opportunities to be active before and after school. Activity becomes a habit when students (and staff) have regular chances to get moving.
• For prizes and rewards, give non-food items like pencils, or stickers, or more playtime.

Eating healthy foods and being physically active helps your child improve:
• memory skills
• the ability to concentrate
• academic performance

What can YOU do at school?
• Look for active ways your child can travel to and from school. Riding a bike, or walking to school with you or a group of friends, or another care-giver might be choices.
• Become involved in your child’s school.
• Support the school’s efforts to teach good nutrition and active living.
• Send your child to school with nutritious lunches and snacks.
Community places and spaces

Community places and spaces should provide safe play areas and safe transportation for children. Healthy food and drinks should be available in community places.

What can YOU do in the community?

• Teach your child the rules of the road to keep them safe on the way to school and in places where they play. Children under nine years old need to be supervised.
• Look around your community for trails, bike paths, playgrounds. Look for sports fields, swimming pools, and indoor and outdoor skating opportunities. Look at sidewalks. Look at routes for walking and bicycling to schools. Look for safe streets and neighbourhoods.
• Get involved. Let the elected representatives in your community know how you want your taxes spent. You want them used to make sure that the design of your community supports active living and healthy eating. For example, ask to have sidewalks on every street. Ask to have healthy foods, like milk instead of pop and granola bars instead of chocolate bars, available in vending machines and canteens in your local recreation centre.
• Talk with people in your neighborhood about how to make your area safer for walking and biking.
• Support local programs that make healthy foods more available.
  – Take part in or start a community garden to grow fresh vegetables and fruit.
  – Join a good food box program that provides fresh vegetables and fruit at bulk cost. For information, visit www.foodsecurityalberta.ca.
  – Give healthy foods to your local food bank.

Try This Quiz

Answer “yes” or “no”.

1. Does your family eat at least one meal a day together?
2. Does your child’s school have healthy food choices available?
3. Does your child’s school provide opportunities for at least 30 minutes planned physical activity every day?
4. Do you have access in your community to safe walking and bike trails, a recreation centre, playgrounds, sidewalks?
5. Do you talk with your child about the media messages they are exposed to when watching TV advertising and surfing the Internet?

Think about your answers. Then decide how you and your child can set goals together to improve.

Sample goal: We will eat breakfast together every Monday and Thursday.
Physical Activity and Active Living

What is a healthy active lifestyle?

Children and youth need at least 90 minutes of physical activity every day, whether they’re at home, at school, or at play. Teach your child the benefits of being active. Remember! When you are active, your child is more likely to be active too!

Being physically active:
- promotes good posture and balance
- strengthens the heart
- promotes good sleep
- helps maintain flexibility
- increases energy levels
- promotes healthy weight

- improves confidence, self-esteem, and concentration
- helps build stronger muscles and bones

Active living is for everyone!
- Plan a fun activity everyone can enjoy. Make it social by inviting friends and neighbours. It could be a treasure hunt, a horseshoe tournament, tobogganing, mini golf.
- Celebrate good things your child does by planning an outing. Go on a hike or picnic in your local park. Take a trip to the zoo, or go for a swim in the local pool.

Keep it simple!
- Make physical activity a part of your daily life.
- Be active at home. Activities you can do with your child include walking the dog, gardening, vacuuming, grocery shopping.
- Play doesn’t need to be an organized event.
**Build confidence!**

- Start with the activities your child enjoys most.
- Offer different things to do. Your child develops skills by trying different sports and activities. These skills give your child confidence to enjoy being active for the rest of their life.
- Help your child learn how to jump, run, hop, skip, roll, climb, kick a ball, and throw.
- Focus on the social and fun aspects of team sports and less on winning.
- Your child will respond to positive support and feedback. Take photographs of your child being active. Then put the photos in places where everyone can see them.
- Encourage both girls and boys to be physically active.

**Create opportunities!**

- Make sure your child has the proper equipment to be active. Provide things such as balls, skipping ropes, a bicycle, a scooter, a skateboard, or in-line skates.
- Make sure your child wears safety gear. Safety gear includes a helmet, knee and elbow pads, wrist guards, a mouth guard, and well fitting shoes. Need equipment? Call Kid Sport Alberta at 1-888-914-KIDS(5437).

**Reduce screen time!**

- Limit the time your child sits watching television, playing video games, or surfing the Internet. Set a limit of two hours or less a day.
- Help your child do creative things like draw, paint, play board games or play outside with friends.

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**Ideas to get moving more!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endurance Activities</th>
<th>Flexibility Activities</th>
<th>Strength Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strengthen heart and lungs</td>
<td>improve stretching and bending</td>
<td>build strong muscles and bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike riding</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Climbing on play structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing tag</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>Building a snowman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking/running</td>
<td>Martial arts</td>
<td>Raking leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skating</td>
<td>Climbing on play structures</td>
<td>Rock climbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboarding</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Hopscotch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Try this quiz

Answer “yes” or “no”.

1. Do you plan daily physical activities and do them with your child?
2. Does your child spend more than two hours a day watching TV, playing computer games, or surfing the Internet?
3. Does your child walk or bike to school?
4. Do you know how much physical activity your child does in school every day?
5. Do you and your child regularly do activities together like hiking, biking, walking, swimming, or skating?
6. Does your child play actively outside on most days?
7. Is your child involved in any organized sport(s) or recreational activities at school or in the community?
8. Is your child physically active for at least 90 minutes every day?

Think about your answers. Then decide on up to three things you and your child will do together over the next month. Set them as goals.

Sample goal: Together we will play catch for 30 minutes in the back yard on Saturday morning instead of playing video games.
Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Use Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating as a Starting Point

Healthy foods are foods that are good sources of nutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Healthy foods have less sugar, fat, and salt. Eating healthy foods promotes your child’s healthy development — physical, mental, emotional, and social.

Take time to make a weekly meal plan. You and your family are worth it!

Making a weekly meal and snack plan is an important first step for healthy eating. A plan helps you organize your time. With a plan, you’ll take fewer trips to the store. You’ll have less need for take-out food or to eat out. Involve the whole family in planning meals and snacks. For helpful information on meal planning, visit Let’s Make a Meal at www.dietitians.ca.

Healthy eating starts with what you put into your cart

Plan meals and snacks before you go shopping. Make a list of the foods you need to buy and use the list while you shop for groceries. For ideas on healthy meals and snacks, visit Healthy Eating is in Store for You at www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca.

Make time to eat together

Everyone is busy today. So you need to plan to make sure you have regular meal times together as often as possible. Serve foods that show your child that healthy eating and feeling great go together. At each meal serve at least three of the four food groups from Canada’s Food Guide.

Be creative! When schedules are hectic, try eating a snack at your usual mealtime. Then eat a meal at snack time.

Offer healthy snacks

Eating small amounts of food between meals helps keeps your child energized throughout the day. Make healthy food snacks from Canada’s Food Guide (see More Information) part of your child’s regular eating routine. You’ll find ideas in the following lists. Remember, it’s your role to provide the food to eat, and to decide when and where to eat it. It’s your child’s role to decide if they are going to eat, and how much.
Tips for meal and snack choices

Plan meals and snacks according to Canada’s Food Guide.

- “Choose most often” foods are healthy daily choices from the four food groups.
- “Choose sometimes” foods are also healthy choices. But they may be lower in fibre, vitamins, and minerals and higher in sugar, salt, or fat.
- “Choose least often” foods contain a lot of sugar, salt, or fat and very little fibre, vitamins, or minerals. It’s all right to use these foods occasionally, but they shouldn’t take the place of healthy food.

Use the following charts as general guidelines, along with your own best judgment. Read food labels to help you choose between similar types of foods. You’ll find helpful information on how to read food labels on the web site Healthy Eating is in Store for You at www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca.

### Foods to choose most often – use every day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain Products</th>
<th>Milk Products</th>
<th>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</th>
<th>Meats &amp; Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain bread/bagels/pita/buns and crackers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English muffins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pancakes/scones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home made muffins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tortillas/rice cakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened/low sugar cereals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noodles/pasta/rice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard cheese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk-based soups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh, canned, or frozen vegetables and fruit with no added sugar or fat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened juices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable soups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken/turkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish/seafood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef/pork/ham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans/peas/lentils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned fish (in water)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter/nuts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Foods to choose sometimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain Products</th>
<th>Milk Products</th>
<th>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</th>
<th>Meats &amp; Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Granola bars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain popcorn/pretzels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit crisps/cobblers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies (oatmeal, peanut butter, dried fruit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggnog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemade puddings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice cream</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milkshakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavoured milks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen yogurt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed cheese slices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables with sauces or breading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit in syrup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit leather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetened fruit juices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried fruit (brush teeth after eating)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean wiener/sausages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned luncheon meats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepperoni sticks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold cuts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish sticks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaded meat strips</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned fish (in oil)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foods to choose least often – do not use these foods every day

- Pastry/danishes
- Cakes
- Presweetened cereals
- Sticky buns/donuts
- Cookies with icing
- Instant noodle soups
- Pie
- Soft drinks/pop
- Fruit drinks (punch)
- Sports drinks
- Syrup
- Chocolate/candy
- Candy bar-flavoured milks
- Frozen ice treats (popsicles)
- Sherbet
- Marshmallows
- Flavoured jelly powder (Jell-O™)
- Flavoured popcorn
- Potato chips/nacho chips
- French fries
- Ready-to-serve pudding cups
- Cheese puffs
- Cheezies
- Cream cheese
- Cheese spreads
- Sour cream
- Bacon
- Gravy
- Whipped cream/topping

Source: Adapted from David Thompson Health Region

Breakfast time

Breakfast gives your child energy and nutrients to get a healthy start to the day. Encourage your child to eat breakfast everyday. Breakfast should include choices from at least three of the four food groups.

Breakfast-in-a-minute ideas*

- Lower sugar cereal or hot cereal with fruit and milk.
- Microwaved egg in a mug, whole wheat toast, and juice.
- Toasted bagel with cheese or peanut butter and a banana.
- Yogurt and fruit smoothies and a small homemade oatmeal muffin.
- Leftovers: pizza, soup, or pasta and a glass of milk.

*Adapted from Capital Health
A bunch of lunch ideas — mix and match to suit U*

Lunch should include a choice from each of the four food groups. How much your child eats will depend on their age, appetite, and activity level. Try these lunches. Post the list on your fridge so your child can make their own lunch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain Products</th>
<th>Milk Products</th>
<th>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</th>
<th>Meats &amp; Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Whole wheat bread</td>
<td>• Cheese slice</td>
<td>• Pineapple juice</td>
<td>• Ham (for sandwich)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cookies</td>
<td>(for sandwich)</td>
<td>• Apple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whole wheat bun</td>
<td>• Chocolate pudding</td>
<td>• Sliced cantaloupe</td>
<td>• Chicken salad with dill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bran muffin</td>
<td>• Cheese string</td>
<td>• Celery sticks</td>
<td>pickles (for bun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tortilla</td>
<td>• Vanilla pudding</td>
<td>• Carrot sticks</td>
<td>• Scrambled eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pita bread</td>
<td>• Milk</td>
<td>• Apple juice</td>
<td>(for tortilla)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spaghetti</td>
<td>• Cheese slice (for sub)</td>
<td>• Veggies for sub</td>
<td>• Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bun</td>
<td>• Milk</td>
<td>(lettuce, tomato, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cold pizza</td>
<td>• Milk</td>
<td>• Fresh veggies with dip</td>
<td>• Meatballs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yogourt</td>
<td>• Canned peaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Honeydew melon balls</td>
<td>• Toppings of choice for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pizza (ham and pineapple,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips to get your child to eat veggies

• Offer veggies when your child is hungry.
• Be a good role model and eat vegetables yourself.
• Pick out a vegetable recipe and prepare veggies with your child.
• Help your child plant and grow vegetables in a garden.
• Add veggies to soups, stews and casseroles.
• Serve veggies raw with a dip.

*Source: Capital Health and Chinook Health Region
Some people think eating healthy costs more. The two lunches compared show healthy eating can cost less and be more nutritious.

### Lunch #1
- Homemade lunch of meat and cheese: $1.11
- 6 whole grain crackers
- Slice of low-fat deli turkey
- Slice of reduced-fat cheese
- Water, 1 bottle: $0.00
- Unsweetened applesauce: $0.30
- Small container of yogourt: $0.58

**Total**: $1.99*

**Savings per meal**: $2.06*

**Savings per school year**: $412.00*

### Lunch #2
- Small pre-packaged lunch meat and cheese (Lunchables®): $2.89
- 1 can pop: $0.49
- 1 Fruit Roll-Up®: $0.30
- Potato chips, 50g: $0.37

**Total**: $4.05*

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**Nutrients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunch #1</th>
<th>Lunch #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher in</td>
<td>Higher in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vitamin C</td>
<td>• Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protein</td>
<td>• Sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calcium</td>
<td>• Salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vitamin A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vitamin D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Source: David Thompson Health Region  *2005 prices
Tips for eating out the healthy way

- Look for eating-places that offer vegetables, fruit, and milk as part of the child’s meal.
- Limit pop and high sugar drinks. Offer milk and water instead.
- Choose foods cooked by healthy methods such as baking, roasting, and steaming instead of deep-fried or pan-fried.
- Be aware of the size of servings.

Tips for avoiding food struggles

- Allow your child to have at least 20 to 30 minutes to eat a meal. If they are distracted or tired, they may slow down.
- Avoid using food as a reward or as a punishment. An example would be bribing your child with dessert.
- Give your child a choice between two healthy food options.
- Encourage your child to try new foods. A child may need to taste a new food 10 to 15 separate times before accepting it. Be patient.

Thirsty?
The best thirst quencher is water and it’s usually free.
Try this quiz

Answer “yes” or “no”.
1. In your family, do you eat meals together on most days of the week?
2. Does your child eat three regular meals and three small healthy snacks every day?
3. Does your child eat breakfast every day?
4. Does your child eat 5-10 servings* of vegetables and fruit daily?
5. Does your child eat 5-12 servings* of grain products (bread, pasta, rice, cereal) every day?
6. Does your child eat enough milk products every day (milk, yogurt, cheese)?
   – 2-3 servings* for children 4-9 years of age
   – 3-4 servings* for youth 10-16 years of age
7. Does your child eat 2-3 servings* of meat/poultry/fish or alternatives (nuts, eggs, beans, peanut butter) every day?
8. Does your child eat a variety of foods every day?
9. Does your family limit the amount they eat of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt such as chips, pop, candy, chocolate bars, and cookies?

Think about your answers. You may want to decide on up to three things your family can do together over the next month. Set them as goals.

For more information on how to make healthier eating choices, contact a registered dietitian or nutritionist in your community. Or visit www.dietitians.ca.

* For more details about what a serving size is, see Canada’s Food Guide.
2 Source: Adapted with permission from “Promoting a healthy weight in children” by York Region Health Services Department.
Positive Self-Image

Your child has a positive self-image when they feel good about themselves. When they are confident about who they are and how they look.

The media and body image

- In television, movies, and magazines, your child sees idealistic images for all women and men that are not realistic. Women are thin and beautiful. Men are muscular and lean.
- To help your child have a positive body image:
  - Talk about unrealistic messages and images in the media. Point out ways advertisers use thin models to sell products and shape the way we think about weight.
  - Teach your child that healthy bodies come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Your child’s body size depends on their genetics, and on how they take care of themselves. Healthy eating, regular physical activity, and managing stress are key.

Growth and development

- Children grow and mature at different rates. Children grow faster in infancy and teenage years. They grow more slowly in preschool and early school years.
- As children grow and develop, height can get ahead of weight, or vice versa. Some children store extra weight before a growth spurt. This normal process helps support their rapid growth.
- Puberty can be an emotional time for both boys and girls. Be supportive — tell your child that puberty is a normal part of growing up.
• Girls tend to mature earlier than boys. Girls gain more fat tissue (breasts, thighs, and hips). On average, girls become 10” taller. And they could gain 40 to 50 pounds between 10 to 15 years of age.

• Boys tend to gain muscle as they grow. On average, boys grow 12” in height and could gain 50 to 60 pounds during their high school years.

• Weight loss diets are not for children. Weight loss diets can be harmful. They can lead to problems with healthy growth. They can also lead to problems with a child’s intellectual, mental, emotional, and social development.

• If you have concerns about your child’s growth, talk to your doctor about having your child assessed. Or talk with a registered dietitian or a registered nurse.

Weight and self-image

• Media messages and peer comments put a child at risk in a number of ways. These include dieting and eating disorders, developing a negative body image, and low self-esteem.

• You can create an environment where all children are welcome and included. Help your child learn how to deal with teasing and bullying.

• Discourage teasing and put-downs. Let your child know that making comments about people's weight, shape, size, or skin tone is not acceptable.

• Teach your child to focus on their abilities, rather than how they look. For example, praise them for the being kind to people and for saying please and thank you.

• Be aware of the messages you send. Pay attention to comments you make about your own appearance and the appearance of others. Avoid using words such as "big", "small", "short", "fat", "skinny", or "clumsy".

• No one person in the home should be stopped from eating certain foods while others are allowed them. Encourage healthy eating for everyone.

• Be active!

How to express concerns

Talk with your child when you are concerned about their health. Remember, the words you use can give your child unintended, negative messages about their body. These tips may help you have a positive talk.

• Use “I” statements like, “I am concerned about your health.” Avoid using “you” statements like “You have to….”

• Focus your talk on the need for a “healthy life-style.” Don’t dwell on eating, weight, or appearance. Don’t use numbers or words that refer to size or shape.

• Be calm and caring. Do not criticize or judge.

• Ask how your child feels about what you are saying. Listen to their answer and be supportive.

• Ask your child what they think they would like to do. Avoid giving simple solutions.

• For more information, talk to your doctor, a registered dietitian, or a registered nurse.

3,4 Source: Adapted and distributed by the Huron County Nutrition Committee, 1992. Adapted and distributed by Nutrition Promotion Program. Peterborough County – City Health Unit 705-743-1000.
Bullying and teasing

• Ask your child to talk about bullying with you, their teacher, or their caregiver.
• The Kids Help Phone is available to children at 1-800-668-6868 or at www.kidshelpphone.com.
• For more information on how to talk to your child about bullying or teasing, call the Parents Help Line at 1-888-603-9100.

Try this quiz

Answer “yes” or “no”.
1. Am I unhappy with my shape and size?
2. Do I talk about being dissatisfied with my body?
3. Do my children often hear me talking with others about my body size and shape?
4. Am I always on a weight loss diet, or planning to go on one?
5. Do children around me know that I am on a weight loss diet?
6. Do I say I feel guilty when I eat certain foods?
7. Do I associate the word “fat” with negative words such as “stupid”, “lazy”, or “ugly”?
8. Do I ever say that a person is “so nice and skinny”?
9. Has my child heard me, or others, say, “Oh, have you lost weight? You look wonderful!”

Did you answer “yes” to one or more questions? If so, then your child may be getting messages that being accepted as a person depends on their body size. Remember, people come in a variety of shapes and sizes. There is no “perfect” body. Every body is a good body, regardless of weight.

5 Source: Adapted with permission from “Promoting a healthy weight in children” by York Region Health Services Department.
Things I am besides a body

Your child has many qualities and abilities that go beyond what they look like. Complete this activity with your child to help them identify all their qualities and abilities.

Some things I like about myself are ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Some things that make me interesting are ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Some things that I am interested in are ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Some things that I am good at are ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Some things that are important to me are ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Different roles I play in life (e.g., sister, brother, friend) are ____________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Think about your answers. Decide on how you and the whole family can set goals together to improve.

Sample goal: Once a week we will write something positive about each other and post it on the fridge.

- Mom gives warm hugs when we get home from school.
- Chris is gentle with Fido when he cleans Fido’s feet after their walk outside.
- I like it when Dad helps me with spelling.
More Information

Contact your health unit, or public health centre, or Health Link Alberta to find out more about other nutrition-related services such as:

- Handouts on healthy eating; lunch and snack ideas; picky eaters; food budgeting; reading labels; and more.
- Contact information for nutrition-related support groups and agencies in your community.
- Nutrition advice from a registered nutritionist or dietitian

Regional health authority offices are listed in phone books or visit: www.health.gov.ab.ca

Health Link Alberta
Edmonton, call 408-LINK (5465)
Calgary, call 943-LINK (5465)
Outside Edmonton and Calgary local calling areas, call toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
www.healthlinkalberta.ca

Creating Healthy Places and Spaces

FOODS AT SCHOOL
The School Nutrition Handbook: Feeding the Future
Creating healthy food and beverage choices at school.
403-943-8127
www.calgaryhealthregion.ca

Physical Activity and Active Living
CANADA’S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

Preventing childhood injuries
www.calgaryhealthregion.ca

SummerActive: School Resource Guide
780-454-4745
www.everactive.org

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating
Available at community health centres and public health units.
613-957-8329
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Eat Well, Live Well™ – Make Nutrition Come Alive
www.dietitians.ca/eatwell

Growing Food Security in Alberta
Learn about local programs that make healthy foods more available.
780-484-9045
www.foodsecurityalberta.ca

Healthy Eating is in Store for You
Learn how to read labels
www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca

Let’s Make a Meal!
A fun interactive menu planner
www.dietitians.ca/eatwell

Mission Nutrition
1-888-453-6374
www.missionnutrition.ca
Feeding the family


*How to Get your Kid to Eat – But Not Too Much.* Ellyn Satter, 1993.

*Raising Happy, Healthy, Weight-Wise Kids.* Judy Toews and Nicole Parton, 2002.


Positive Self-Image

**ADVERTISING AND MEDIA MESSAGES**

*Concerned Children’s Advertisers*

www.cca-canada.com

Help your child learn to see what lies behind media messages.

*Concerns about advertising:*

Advertising Standards Council
(416) 961-6311
comments@adstandards.com

*Concerns about TV programs:*

Canadian Broadcast Standards Council
(613) 233-4607
complaints@cbsc.ca

**SELF-IMAGE**

*Body Image Resource Collection (BIRC) for Teachers.* Available from Alberta Learning Resource Centre and community health centres.


www.dietitians.ca

Note: The growth charts should only be used by health professionals.

*Self-Esteem and Body Image Resources for Parents*

www.missionnutrition.ca


www.oregondairyCouncil.org

**Bullying and Teasing**

*The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander.*

From preschool to high school: how parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence. Barbara Coloroso, 2003.

www.kidsareworthit.com

*National Crime Prevention Council*

A list of resources, programs, and links to effective anti-bullying strategies.

www.prevention.gc.ca

www.bullying.org

*To talk with someone about bullying*

Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868

Parents Help Line
1-888-603-9100
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- York Region Health Services Department: Promoting a healthy weight in children