

NUTRITION

FACT SHEET



What's a Mom to Do? Healthy Eating Tips for Families



Most moms agree that feeding their family well is very important. According to a new survey commissioned by Wendy's®, 80% of moms would like to get their kids to eat healthier—but many obstacles get in their way. Families juggle busy schedules that make it difficult to eat together and don't leave enough time to shop or cook. Nearly 40% of moms surveyed feel that healthy foods don't always taste good. For others, the challenge is a family that doesn't want to eat healthy foods or is on a limited food budget.

Busy moms—especially young moms—are also frustrated by the flood of changing nutrition advice, especially as they try to make sensible dietary decisions for their families. Moms have a wealth of concerns when it comes to their children's eating habits. The top concern, shared by more than four-in-10 moms, is that kids are not eating enough fruits and vegetables. Picky eaters and eating too much junk food round out the top three overall concerns of moms.

What's a mom to do? Start with these easy, practical tips:

- **Make mealtime family time.** Try to have at least one meal a day together. Eating meals as a family can actually improve your children's food habits since kids tend to eat more fruits, vegetables and dairy foods at meals shared with their parents.
- **Get the family involved in meal planning and preparation.** Your kitchen can be a learning laboratory. Give kids simple tasks to help with family food shopping, preparation

and cleanup. Children are more likely to eat foods that they have helped to prepare.

- **Be a good role model.** Moms and dads often tell their kids to eat healthy but don't follow the advice for themselves. Make sure you set a good example for your family. Healthy eating is a lifestyle—not a fad. It needs to be a family affair that begins at an early age.
- **Try something new.** Set a goal to include one new food or recipe each week. You'll soon discover new favorites to incorporate into family menus. When you want your children to eat more fruits and vegetables, try a new or exotic variety like mangoes or tangelos. To make fruit easier to eat, serve it in bite-sized pieces with some yogurt for delicious dipping!

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What's a Mom to Do? Healthy Eating Tips for Families (continued)

- **Freshness and quality are key.** Opt for fresh, quality products when choosing foods for your family. Fresher foods provide higher amounts of essential nutrients and taste better when they're at their peak. Buy fruits and vegetables in season to stretch your food dollar, too.
- **Stash healthy snacks.** Keep healthy, nutritious snacks in key places at all times—your purse, the car, your desk drawer. As you run out the door, grab a few healthy snacks – crackers and peanut butter, small boxes of cereal, fresh fruit, pretzels, or plain popcorn. You won't be tempted to eat unhealthy options and you'll have portable nutrition for your kids.
- **Think creatively to adapt to your family's schedule.** Try changing the time of your meals so you can have at least four family meals per week. Accommodate a busy schedule by working in time for a meal. For example, have a tailgate picnic before or after a game or practice.
- **Face dining out challenges head-on.** Moms feel restaurants don't have enough variety for their entire family. This doesn't have to be the case. Choose restaurants that allow you to mix and match food options that give you the control to create a balanced meal for you and your family.
- **Be informed when dining out.** Visit restaurant Web sites or call ahead to find out information about their menu. Some Web sites provide nutrition breakdowns for menu items. Use this information to help you select a restaurant and to plan meals ahead of time.
- **Get help from a nutrition expert.** A registered dietitian (RD) is uniquely qualified to help families improve their eating habits. Whether it's special challenges like picky eaters or health issues such as weight management, an RD can provide a personalized guide to healthy eating for your family.

For a referral to a registered dietitian and for additional food and nutrition information visit
WWW.EATRRIGHT.ORG

What's your most valuable source of good nutrition? Registered Dietitians are the experts when it comes to helping people eat well and stay healthy. An RD has the knowledge and expertise to develop an eating plan to meet the needs of all individuals.

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