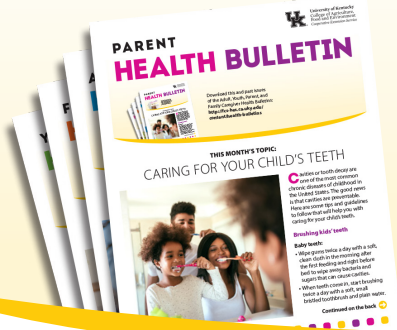




University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



FEBRUARY 2023

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS TO FOOD



You may have heard that variety is the spice of life. Variety is also the key to a healthy and balanced diet for adults and children alike. Our bodies need many different nutrients to grow, develop, and work properly. Many children do not get the right amount of nutrients in their diet. As parents and caregivers, you must pay attention to the foods your children eat. You should provide them with the right kinds of foods to help them grow to their full potential and learn their best.

It can be easy for children and families to get into a food rut. It's easy to eat the same foods over and over because they are quick, avoid confrontation, and you know your child will eat them. But it is important to encourage children to eat lots of different kinds

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Disabilities
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Allowing your child to choose fruits or vegetables at the grocery could increase their desire to eat them.

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of foods to get the nutrients they need. It also helps them develop a healthy relationship with food.

There may be specific reasons that a food may be off limits for your family, such as food allergies and religious or moral reasons. But it's helpful to avoid labelling food as "good" or "bad." Instead, encourage eating a variety of foods. Considering the food groups can be a way to check to see if your family is eating a good balance of different types of foods. The five groups are fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein.

- **Fruits and vegetables:** Encourage eating different colors, textures, and tastes in fruits and vegetables. Fresh and cooked vegetables and fruits are important sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. For this reason, encourage eating as much of the fruit or vegetable as possible, including the skin of many, to get all the good nutrients.
- **Grains:** Whole grains include whole wheat, brown rice, quinoa, and foods made with them, such as whole-grain pasta and 100% whole-wheat bread. They provide long-lasting energy, and keep our stomachs feeling fuller, longer than refined grains. Watch out for the amount of added sugar in grain products. Try to choose bread, cereal, and pasta options that are not so sugary.
- **Protein:** Protein-rich foods include lean meat, fish, chicken, eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, and nuts. These foods are important for a child's growth and muscle development. They also contain other useful vitamins and minerals that are important for brain development and learning at all ages.
- **Dairy:** Key dairy foods include milk, cheese, and yogurt. These foods are good sources of protein and calcium, which help build strong muscles and hard bones in the body. You can drink or eat dairy foods and include them in meals and snacks in many ways.

Involving your child in meal planning and grocery shopping can be a great way to encourage trying new foods. If it fits in your family routine,



allow your child to choose fruits or vegetables at the grocery. This could help increase their desire to eat them. Cooking as a family can also encourage trying new recipes. If you are in a food rut at home, head over to **PlanEatMove.com/recipes** to find new and fun ideas for meals and snacks that include ingredients from all five food groups.

REFERENCE:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/kids-healthy-eating-plate>

ADULT
HEALTH BULLETIN

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