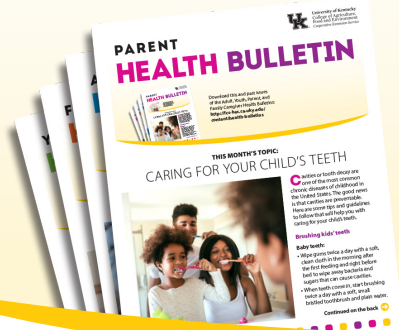


# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



**MARCH 2025**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

# PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU TALK ABOUT FOOD WITH KIDS



**P**arents have a powerful influence on how their children think about food. The language used around food shapes children's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward eating. They can last a lifetime. Using positive and supportive language when talking about food is vital for helping children develop a healthy relationship with food. This means enjoying a variety of foods without guilt or anxiety. It means understanding that food is fuel for our bodies, not something to be feared or controlled.

From a young age, children listen and learn from the way we talk about food. If we use labels for food like "good" or "bad," children might start to view eating as something that is either right or wrong. They won't see it as just a way to nourish

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**Don't say a food is "unhealthy."**

**Say, "This is a treat that we can enjoy**

**sometimes, but we also need other**

**foods that help our body feel good**

**every day."**

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their bodies. For example, when we say things like, "this is so unhealthy," or "that is bad for you," it can create confusion and stress around food. These types of comments can lead children to feel guilty for enjoying certain foods. This could lead to unhealthy eating habits or an unhealthy relationship with food.

One of the most important things we can do is avoid labeling food as "good" or "bad." While it's important to encourage healthy eating habits, no food should ever be completely "off-limits" or "bad." If we only talk about food in terms of judgment, like saying, "You can't have that," or labeling food as "junk food," children may begin to feel like certain foods are forbidden or "wrong" to eat. This can lead to feelings of shame or guilt when they eat those foods, even in moderation.

Instead of labeling food, it's more helpful to talk about food in terms of balance. For example, don't say a food is "unhealthy." Say, "This is a treat that we can enjoy sometimes, but we also need other foods that help our body feel good every day." This helps children understand that it's OK to eat foods that are more indulgent. It's OK when they're balanced with other foods that provide our body with the nutrients it needs. It also helps set

the foundation for a balanced view of food. It helps them understand that all foods have a place in a healthy diet and should be enjoyed without shame.

The way we talk about food can shape children's attitudes toward eating. By using positive, nonjudgmental language, we can help them build a healthy relationship with food that will last a lifetime. Encourage balance with food choices. Promote a positive food environment to help children see food as something that nourishes, rather than something to fear or feel guilty about.

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**HEALTH BULLETIN**

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