

General Healthy Eating Tips

1. **Eat breakfast.** Choose breakfast cereals with a low GI (glycaemic index) for sustained energy.
2. **Offer vegetables and fruit at most meals.** Use low-fat sauces or dressings to make the vegetables more appealing.
3. Look for **whole grain** alternative products that are high in fibre and low in sugar, fat and salt. Low GI products are good choices.
4. Choose **low-fat milk and dairy products.** Dairy products are important for providing calcium and vitamin D for healthy bones.
5. **Less fat.** Trim the fat from meats; remove the skin from chicken.
6. **Limit** foods high in **saturated fats** : butter; chips; cookies; donuts; pastries; chocolate; deep fried foods.
7. Include a small amount of **unsaturated fat** every day. Good foodstuffs in this regard include : avocado, nuts, peanut butter, olives, olive/canola oil.
8. Offer **water** when your children are thirsty instead of sugary drinks. Do not give children energy drinks or drinks containing caffeine – this can cause sleep disturbances and anxiety.
9. On juice : Rather give whole fruit (more fibre and less sugar). If you give juice, serve only 100% juice and dilute with water. Limit the amount of juice drank per day : 125-175ml (4-6 years); 250-375ml (7-11 years).
10. **On the go** : Avoid packaged and processed foods (like polony, viennas, chips, cookies), rather give healthy options like nuts, dried fruit, yoghurt, low GI buns or Provita with tuna or chicken.
11. **Trust your child's appetite.** Let them serve themselves from a variety of healthy foods based on their hunger and satiety. Do not force them to finish their plate. Do not use food as a reward or punishment.
12. Eat together as a family without distractions – turn off the TV and cellphone.
13. **Have a "cheat" day** where high sugar, high fat foods are allowed in conjunction with healthy foods.

These tips have been developed in collaboration with Riekie Van der Vyfer, who is a registered dietician at Quenet's Family Pharmacy, Worcester (Tel: 023 347 0844 or email: riekievyver@lantic.net).