

Best Feeding Practices

For Toddlers, Children, Pre-Teens, and Adolescents



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HETM 3-Month Topic Forecast

June

Older Adult /
Geriatric
Nutrition

July

Best Backyard
Barbecue

August

Pre-Diabetes

Healthy Eating Tip of the Month

This is a monthly nutrition information program coordinated by Patient Food and Nutrition Services at the University of Michigan Health Systems. Past monthly topics have included Childhood Obesity, Healthy Eating for Mom and Baby, and much more. Check back monthly to broaden your knowledge on a variety of nutrition topics. For quick and easy access, bookmark the [HETM website](#) in your Internet browser.



Best Feeding Practices for Toddlers and Children

Food Acceptance Starts At Home



Do you have a picky little eater on your hands? Many children may push new foods away or spit them out. It can be hard to get them to try new things, especially fruits and vegetables. Children learn how to eat and like new foods from their parents. That is why it is so important for parents to be good role models. Children also learn from their surroundings. Are mealtimes happy, stressful, enjoyable, or rushed? The mood at mealtimes can impact a child's feelings about food. If parents are good eaters themselves and create caring, happy feeding times, this will help children learn to be good eaters, too.

Resist the Urge to Force Feed

Does your toddler push food around on their tray and drop pieces on the floor? Does this mean they are being naughty? Or are they full and no longer interested in their meal? Parents may try to correct "naughty" behaviors by pressuring their child to finish the food left on their tray. However, if children are scolded and forced to finish every meal, they may begin to think that eating is stressful. If children are scared of mealtimes, they could be more likely to push away food even more in the future. Allowing children to stop eating when they show that they are full will help them understand how much food makes their body feel good. They will know what it means to be hungry or full, and they will be less likely to eat too much or too little.



Try, Try, and Try Again

Picky children may seem to be the boss of mealtimes when they will not try new foods. If you feel trapped because your child won't eat anything other than their favorite familiar foods, don't worry. Research has shown that toddlers and children may need to be offered a food 10 to 15 different times before choosing to eat it. Encourage your child, don't lose hope, and remember not to make mealtimes stressful. Before you know it, your child will be trying many foods that will help them grow big and strong.



What is Your Job?

According to the research and professional wisdom of Ellyn Satter, a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, parents aren't the only ones with responsibilities in the kitchen. Even children have jobs when it comes to their feeding responsibilities.

Parent/Caretaker Jobs

- Create supportive family meals and snacks – **provide encouragement instead of pressure.**
- Set the time for meals and snacks, choose what food to offer, and decide where the meal will take place – **children need structure.**
- Teach by demonstration. Practice good table manners and show your child how to choose a balanced meal – **be a good role model.**
- Prepare foods that are safe for your child to eat – **think about choking hazards if your child has trouble chewing and swallowing.**

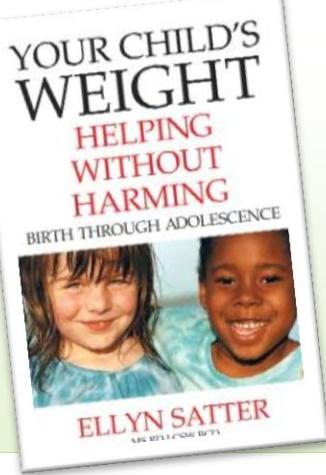
Toddler Jobs

- Sit with the family at meals
- Practice self-feeding skills
- Choose how much to eat
- Learn to like new foods

Child Jobs

- All toddler jobs still apply, plus...
- Practice good table manners
- Help with simple food preparation

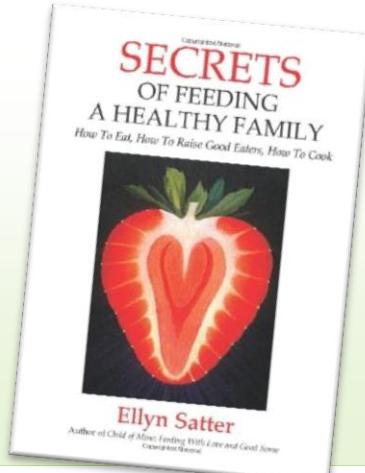
Would you like a *FREE* copy of this book? During the month of May, visit the Healthy Eating Tip of the Month bulletin board in the University Hospital cafeteria. Enter the drawing for a chance to win!



Want to Learn More?

To explore these topics further, check out these books by Ellyn Satter – Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, family therapist, and internationally recognized specialist of eating and feeding practices.

Her website, [Ellyn Satter Institute](http://EllynSatterInstitute.org), also provides newsletters about how to feed, how to eat, research, and much more.



Best Feeding Practices for Pre-Teens and Adolescents

Be Their Food Partner, Not the Food Police

The teenage years are a time of many changes and growing independence. Teens still need some structure, but they can handle more flexibility in their food choices than children.



Involve Them In Meal Planning

As a team, you can work together to plan well-balanced meals. This can also be a time to teach them about the value of trying new recipes, creating a food budget, or planning a grocery-shopping list.

Ask Them to Cook With You

While providing and preparing meals is still generally the parent's responsibility, involving your teen in the cooking process can help them develop lifelong skills. Also, research shows that teens who help with meal preparation are more likely to eat nutritious meals and snacks more often.

Allow Them to Choose Their Own Snacks

Teens enjoy having a say in what and when they eat. You provide the guidelines (general timeframe and snack options) and they make the decisions (when and what to eat).



Resist the Urge to Control

Using controlling feeding practices, such as restriction or pressure, can negatively impact your teen's eating confidence.

Teens who feel their food intake is being controlled are more likely to develop eating disorders or have trouble learning to recognize when they are actually hungry or full. Have supportive conversations with your teen. This is a great time to help build body confidence.

Make Family Meals a Priority

Family mealtime provides a chance for communication, bonding, and strengthening of family values. Demonstrating that you value positive family mealtime also shows your teen that you value them.

Snacks Fit for a Teen

With busy schedules, sports, and other activities, teens need snacks that will fill them up and provide good nutrition. A satisfying snack should include 2 or 3 foods and have a combination of protein and carbohydrates. Here are some suggestions to get you started!



String cheese and grapes



Hummus and raw vegetables



Peanut butter and sliced apples



Mixed nuts and popcorn



Cottage cheese and crackers

Why Protein and Carbohydrates?

These are the building blocks for growing and active bodies!

- **Protein** is important for building muscle and healing wounds (ex: scrapes/cuts). The body processes protein more slowly than carbohydrates. For this reason, protein satisfies our hunger and keeps us fuller longer. Healthy choices include: lean meat, poultry, soy products, fish, eggs, and low-fat dairy.
- **Carbohydrates** are the main fuel source for our brains. Not to mention, carbohydrates provide the quickest source of energy for our muscles. It is best to choose complex carbs, such as whole grains or foods with more fiber (ex: fruit, vegetables, beans). They provide a steady supply of energy and keep us full longer than simple carbs do.
 - *Simple carbs such as sugary foods may give us that quick burst of energy, but they do not keep us full for long and may lack important nutrients.*



Best Feeding Practices For Good Bone Development

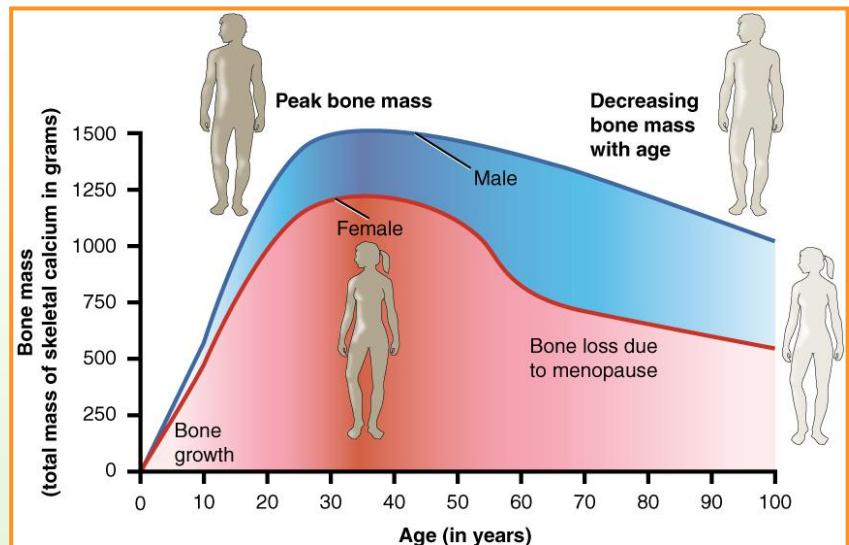
Childhood and adolescence are times of rapid bone development. The bones are growing very quickly, so it is important for children and teens to eat a well-balanced diet that provides enough calcium.

Building strong bones early in life will also help your child when they grow older. People lose bone mass as they age. This increases the risk of developing osteoporosis, which is a condition of having weakened, brittle bones. Weak bones are more likely to break or fracture. We only get one set of bones, so teach your children how to make their bones as strong as they can be! They will thank you later.



Bone Growth is a Big Deal!

The strength and density of our bones is known as bone mass. Did you know that during the childhood and adolescent years is when the greatest amount of bone mass is built? By the time teens finish puberty (around 16 years of age), it is estimated that they have reached 80-90% of their highest adult bone mass. Total bone mass reaches its greatest amount between the ages of 18-35. After that time, people lose bone mass more quickly than they build it. Check out the following nutrition recommendations and tips to learn how children and teens can get enough calcium to build strong healthy bones.



Sources of Calcium

Best sources of calcium are dairy foods, such as milk, cheese, pudding and yogurt. However, there are plenty of non-dairy foods that are good sources of calcium, too!

Daily Intake Goals

	Age (years)	Calcium (mg) ¹	Dairy Servings ²
Toddlers	2-3	700	2 cups
Children	4-8	1000	2 ½ cups
Pre-teens	9-13	1300	3 cups
Adolescents	14-18	1300	3 cups

Sources: (1) National Institutes of Health – Calcium; (2) Choose MyPlate – Dairy



Dairy Products

- Milk, calcium-fortified soymilk
- Pudding, Yogurt, Ice cream
- Cheese (examples: cheddar, mozzarella, cottage cheese)

Non-Dairy Products

- Calcium-fortified juices, cereals, breads, rice milk, and almond milk
- Dried figs, currants, oranges
- Canned fish (sardines)
- Chick peas, white beans, red beans
- Broccoli, edamame, okra, rhubarb
- Leafy greens: collard and turnip greens, kale, bok choy
- Almonds, hazelnuts
- Soy products (tofu made with calcium sulfate, soy yogurt, tempeh)

* The non-dairy list contains examples of foods that contain >50 mg Calcium per serving, but it is not complete. Please note, the amount of calcium that can be absorbed from non-dairy products varies.

What Counts as One Cup of Dairy?

- 1 cup milk or calcium-fortified soy milk
- 1 cup (8 ounces) yogurt or pudding
- 1 ½ ounces hard cheese
- ¼ cup shredded cheese
- 2 cups cottage cheese
 - ½ cup cottage cheese = ¼ cup milk
- 1 cup frozen yogurt

*What else counts as a cup of dairy? Check out:
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/dairy.html>

Orange Dream Smoothie

For a yummy calcium-rich treat, try out a new smoothie. Click [here](#) to get the recipe!

Each serving has 190 mg calcium.



MyPlate Daily Food Group Recommendations: Healthy Eating for Toddlers to Teens

	Toddlers	Children	Pre-teens		Adolescents	
	2-3 years	4-8 years	Girls 9-13 years	Boys 9-13 years	Girls 14-18 years	Boys 14-18 years
Grains	3 oz	5 oz	5 oz	6 oz	6 oz	8 oz
1 ounce equivalent of grains = 1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cooked cereal (example: cooked oatmeal), 3 cups popped popcorn, 1 small flour tortilla (6 inch diameter)						
Vegetables	1 cup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	2 cups	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	3 cups
1 cup serving of vegetables = 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, 2 cups raw leafy greens (example: spinach or lettuce), 12 baby carrots, 2 large stalks celery (11-12 inches long)						
Fruits	1 cup	1 – 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	2 cups
1 cup serving of fruit = 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, 1 cup applesauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried fruit, 32 seedless grapes, 1 small apple (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter), 8 large strawberries, 1 large banana (8-9 inches long), 1 large orange (3-1/16 inch diameter), 2 small clementines ("cuties")						
Protein Foods	2 oz	4 oz	5 oz	5 oz	5 oz	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz
1 ounce equivalent of protein = 1 ounce meat, poultry or fish; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon peanut butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves), $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce seeds (example: pumpkin or sunflower seeds), $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tofu, 2 tablespoons hummus						
Dairy	2 cups	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups
1 cup serving of dairy = 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soymilk; 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of hard cheese (examples: cheddar, mozzarella, swiss), $\frac{1}{3}$ cup shredded cheese, 2 slices processed cheese (American)						

What Does One Serving Look Like?

1 cup (or 1 ounce) dry cereal	3 ounces cooked meat	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of hard cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh fruit	2 tablespoons peanut butter or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried fruit
 Baseball or fist	 Deck of cards	 4 dice	 Tennis ball	 Golf ball

Helpful Websites

- **Feeding Your Child and Teen:**

The University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) provides helpful information and links about: nutrition for your child, feeding tips, family mealtime, recipes, growth charts, and other great feeding resources.

www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/feed.htm

- **Food Safety for Kids:**

When it comes to feeding your children, food safety is very important. From hand washing to cooking to food storage, this site has it all!

www.homefoodsafety.org/kids

- **ChooseMyPlate.gov:**

This resource from the United States Department of Agriculture provides excellent information and tools for healthy eating and active lifestyles.

www.choosemyplate.gov

- **TeensHealth – Nutrition & Fitness Center:**

Coordinated by Nemours Children's Health System, this link provides teen-friendly recipes and food & nutrition information.

www.kidshealth.org/teen/nutrition_fitness_center

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- Haycraft E, Goodwin H, Meyer C. Adolescents' level of eating psychopathology is related to perceptions of their parents' current feeding practices. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2014; 54: 204-208.
- Chu YL, Storey KE, Veugelers PJ. Involvement in meal preparation at home is associated with better diet quality among Canadian children. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 2014; 46: 304-308.
- International Osteoporosis Foundation: www.iofbonehealth.org/bone-development-young-people-0
- United Dairy Industry of Michigan: www.milkmeansmore.org
- Choose MyPlate – Dairy: www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/dairy.html
- Vegan Diet –The Vegetarian Resource Group: www.vrg.org/nutrition/calcium.php
- National Institutes of Health – Calcium Fact Sheet for Consumers: http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Calcium_Consumer/#h2

Still have questions about feeding your toddler, child, pre-teen, or adolescent?



[Click here to visit now!](#)

This website is run by The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It provides credible resources from Registered Dietitian Nutritionists.



Created by: Holly Janusz, Dietetic Intern

Patient Food and Nutrition Services
300 N. Ingalls Street
NIB NI8E20
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5407
(734) 936-5197