

# Parents, You Can Lead the Way!

## *Fruits, Vegetables, and Physical Activity* **Action Steps Parents Can Take at Home**

- ☑ **Keep a variety of ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables available.**
  - Keep fresh fruit in a bowl on the counter. Choose items that are easy to grab and eat, such as apples, pears, plums, and grapes.
  - Keep easy-to-eat vegetables in the refrigerator to grab as snacks, such as cherry tomatoes, sugar snap peas, baby carrots, and multi-colored bell pepper strips.
  - Serve a fruit or vegetable with every meal and snack. You can put out a bowl of carrots and celery that kids can snack on while dinner is being prepared.
  - Bring home a new fruit or vegetable every once in a while. Learn how to prepare it, and encourage your kids to try it. Have your kids ever seen papaya, kiwifruit, baby bok choy, radish sprouts, butternut squash, or broccolini?
  - Keep frozen fruits and vegetables and canned beans available as easy additions to dinner. It's easy and tasty to add some frozen peas to a pasta dish or some kidney beans to a soup.
  
- ☑ **Sit down for a meal with your children at least once a day.** When kids eat on their own, they are less likely to eat healthy food, including fruits and vegetables. Mealtimes is the perfect occasion to talk with your children about fruits and vegetables. Ask your children:
  - How many servings of fruits and vegetables have you eaten today?
  - How many are in the current meal?
  - What fruits and vegetables should we have tomorrow night?
  
- ☑ **Include your kids in fruits and vegetables decisions,** whether that means making the grocery list together or coming along to the store.
  - Ask your kids to select their favorite fruits and vegetables at the store. Put them in charge of making creative green salads or healthy fruit salads.
  - Take your kids to a great farmer's market or a beautiful supermarket produce section. Talk about the wide variety that's available, and what you could do with different produce items. Take home a few new things and experiment together.
  - Have your kids help prepare fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks. Kids can help wash fresh fruits and vegetables, add them to recipes, or make salads.
  
- ☑ **Understand the health benefits of fruits and vegetables,** so that you'll be able to help your kids understand why it's so important to eat them. Visit [www.5aday.gov](http://www.5aday.gov).
  
- ☑ **Be physically active.** Staying active and eating healthy go hand-in-hand – it's critical to do both in order to achieve better health.
  - Children should get 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on 5 days of the week or more.
  - Encourage kids to participate in activities that get them moving – like sports, dance, swimming, or outdoor games – instead of watching TV.
  - Make physical activity part of family time. Play a game outside, or take a bike ride together to a local park for a healthy, fruit-and-vegetable-filled picnic.



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