

Home Is Where the Health Is

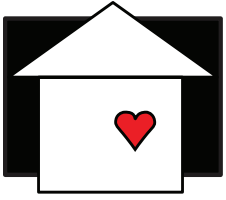
Create “Family Glue” and Build a Happy, Healthy Home

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The warmth and love that bond family members together can be called “family glue.” This booklet will give you some ideas about creating and strengthening that glue, which is key to keeping your family healthy and happy.

Home Is Where the Health Is



Care for yourself.

Doing well as a parent begins with feeling healthy.

Being well means feeling rested, alive, at peace

with yourself, and in control of your life. Family members know they can count on you because you have energy and a positive attitude. Sounds wonderful, doesn't it?

Help yourself feel healthier.

- Eat healthful foods.
- Sleep 7–9 hours every day.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- Do not smoke. Most important, do not smoke around your child.
- Share your feelings and develop a support network.
- Make time for yourself daily. When you make time for yourself, give yourself a pat on the back.
 - ♦ Say no to activities that prevent you from doing something more important.
 - ♦ Put your “me” time on your to-do list or calendar as you would any other appointment.
 - ♦ Multi-task (read while waiting for appointments, update your to-do list while waiting in the check-out line).
- Schedule a babysitter.

- Think positively. When you can't avoid worrying, practice ways to cope without crisis.
 - ♦ Separate what you can control from those things you really can't control.
 - ♦ List the things you have to do, and rank them in order of importance.
 - ♦ Ask yourself if someone else can do some of the items on your list.
 - ♦ Ask for help when necessary.
 - ♦ Make your goals realistic. What three things can you likely get done today?


Bond and communicate with your child.

Communication is essential to a happy, healthy family. Bond with your child while you give her a chance to practice her growing communication skills.

- Be loving, kind, and respectful. Your child will learn by your example to show respect to you and others.
- Smile and laugh with your child. Look into your child's eyes at the same time. Your child will likely smile back!



When you are healthy, you are better at managing stress. Take good care of yourself, and you will have more to give your child.



You teach by your example. Your child adores you and wants to be like you. When you show love, your child learns how to love. Children grow and thrive in a happy home.

- Take time to listen to your child's ideas and stories. Answer with your own ideas.
- Catch your child behaving well. Let her know about it with smiles, hugs, and happy words. She'll want to keep behaving well!
- Know what to expect from your child. Your child grows and changes at her own rate of speed and will not be exactly like another child of the same age. Focus on helping her take the next steps in her growth.

Fix family problems by being a leader.


You are your child's first and most important teacher. Being a teacher means being a coach or leader for your child.

To be a good parent, sometimes you have to say "no" to your child. It may not be popular or easy to say no, but standing strong when necessary can pay off. When they have firm limits, children:

- Feel secure
- Behave better
- Know what you expect of them
- Learn self-control

Lead by using positive discipline.

- Use routines and limits to help your child feel safe and loved. Set regular times for family meals, snacks, fun times, story reading, baths, naps, and bedtimes.
- Look at things from your child's point of view.
- Set a few clear, simple rules for good behavior. Repeat your rules often in a firm voice. For example: "Please put your toys away." "Use words to ask for what you need."
- Tell your child what to do instead of what not to do. For example, instead of "Don't yell!" look into your child's eyes and say firmly, "Please talk to Tonya in a soft voice."
- Tell your child beforehand what will happen if he breaks a rule. The consequence—what will happen—should relate logically to the rule that was broken, and should be enforced right away. For example, your rule is to take turns with toys. Your child refuses to let another child take a turn playing with his dump truck. You state the rule, let the guest play with the dump truck, and tell your child he cannot play with the dump truck the rest of the afternoon.
- Enforce the rules at all times. Your child will learn that you mean what you say.



Be friendly, but not your child's best friend. Remember, you are the family leader.

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Help your family enjoy eating good foods.


Research tells us that kids who eat meals with their families are more likely to get good grades. That's a real bonus for making family meals happen! The following guidelines will make family meals more than just a time to eat.

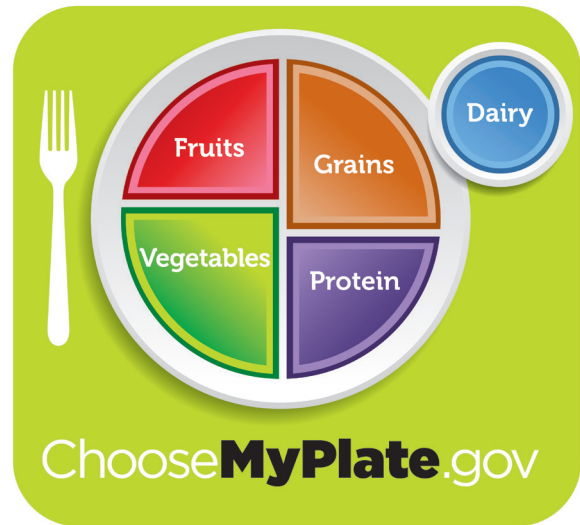
- Children thrive on the routine of eating each meal at about the same time each day.
- Prepare food together. It's fun to do, and children will be more likely to eat what they have prepared.
- Turn the TV off during meals. Focus on each other, and on eating mindfully.
- Use meal time to listen, talk, smile, and understand each other.

Offer healthy foods regularly.

Serve foods from each of the five MyPlate food groups every day. They are:

- Grains (bread and cereals)
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dairy products
- Protein foods such as meat, nuts, eggs, and dried beans

 Your child learns by watching and imitating you, so be the best "healthy habits" role model you can be.



Teach your children to enjoy a variety of foods.

You can help your children learn to enjoy whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. Following are some ways to teach them to make healthful choices.

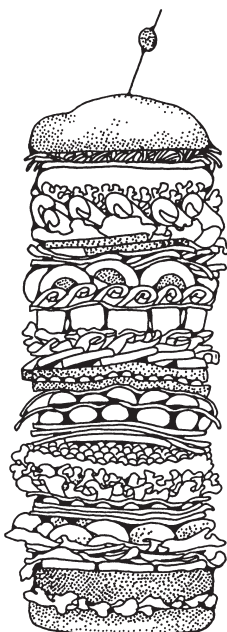
- Give children choices. Let your child choose between two or three foods you know are good for them. For example, "Do you want an apple or an orange?" "Would you rather have broccoli or carrot sticks with your sandwich?"
- Serve colorful and interesting food. Children judge a food by how it looks. A slice of apple or orange can help make a meal look better to your child.
- Introduce a new food in a very small amount along with familiar foods. It may take up to 12 times for your child to feel brave enough to taste and eat the food. Be patient and keep at it.


- Be respectful of your child's tastes. She may never learn to like a food; that's OK.
- Be a great role model. Show your child how much you enjoy healthful foods.
- Be careful about serving foods and beverages that are not healthful choices for your family.
- Limit foods that are low in nutrients and high in fat and calories. Check food labels.
- Avoid soda pop and limit fruit juices.
- Serve milk at meals and water between meals for everyone.
- Limit fast food to one or two meals each week.
- Limit your child's exposure to advertising on TV and other media. He will be less likely to ask for the treats or snacks with empty calories.
- Write a shopping list of healthy foods before you go to the store. Occasional treats are okay.

Large portions are a no-no.

Most people overeat when given large amounts of food. Help your family learn to eat the amount that is "just right."

- Offer small servings of food on smaller plates. Let people ask for seconds.
- If someone is not hungry at meal time, do not force him to eat.
- Provide meals and snacks on a reliable schedule.



 **Avoid mindless eating. Keep your mind on what you put into your mouth.**

Let your child decide how much to eat.

- ♦ Avoid restriction if your child is overweight. Restriction almost always backfires and makes the problem worse.
- ♦ Never put a child on a diet. Work with a doctor or registered dietitian to help your child reach a healthier weight. Help children grow into a healthy weight by practicing healthy habits, not diets.
- ♦ Serve child-size portions of healthful foods. Your child will more likely grow into a weight that is good for her body size and age.

Be a good example for your child.


- ♦ Eat when you are hungry.
- ♦ Stop eating when you start to feel full.
- ♦ Limit your portion sizes.
- ♦ Avoid using food as a reward or comfort.
- ♦ Make up your mind to be as healthy a parent as you can be.
- ♦ Move toward a healthy weight by focusing on healthy habits as suggested in this booklet, not diets.

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Snack smart.


Encourage your children to snack smart, and offer them healthful choices. Avoid the usual snack foods such as chips, snack cakes, candy, fruit drinks, and highly sweetened drinks like soda pop. Poor-quality foods rob your child twice—once when they are eaten and a second time when the calories replace those of more nutritious food. Snack time is also a good time to get your child to try new foods. Snacks should be:

- Small amounts of the same kinds of foods you serve at meals
- Not served closer than 1½ hours before or after a meal
- Low-fat, low-sugar, and low-salt foods such as:
 - ♥ Non-sugared cereal with low-fat milk
 - ♥ Low-fat milk or water
 - ♥ Graham crackers
 - ♥ Pretzels or unbuttered popcorn
 - ♥ Cheese slices or cubes
 - ♥ Fresh fruit
 - ♥ Snack-size low-fat yogurt or pudding
 - ♥ Whole-grain breads or crackers
 - ♥ Raw vegetables such as carrot sticks

 **Avoid putting a TV or computer in your child's bedroom. It cuts into family time and discourages active play.**

Move more, sit less.

- Help each family member find an activity to enjoy daily.
- Build activity into your routines with family jobs, such as grocery shopping, doing the laundry, getting the mail, and walking the dog.
- Limit screen time for everyone in the family to two hours or less a day.
 - ♦ No screen time for a child under two years old.
 - ♦ No TVs or computers in bedrooms.
 - ♦ A TV or computer in the bedroom makes it hard for you to monitor what your child is watching. It also cuts into family time and discourages active play.
- Engage in active family play. Think about how to have an hour of active fun with your child each day. If an hour seems too hard to come by, make a small start. There are so many ways to enjoy playing together.
- Take a walk together twice a week after supper. It's a great way to listen and talk together. After a while, speed up your pace. Be safe after dark by using reflective tape on clothing and shoes.
- If you have green space around your house, hang a swing from a sturdy tree.
- Purchase or mix a bubble solution. Blow bubbles with your child and chase the bubbles in the sunshine.
- Mark off a hopscotch court on a driveway or sidewalk. Teach your child how to play hopscotch.

 Be patient yet determined. Small changes can make a **BIG** difference over time!

- Keep toys around the house that make playing actively lots of fun. Examples are balls of various sizes, Frisbees[®], jump ropes, Hula Hoops[®], tricycles, bicycles, roller skates, badminton equipment, or inline skates. Be sure your child practices safety by wearing protective gear.
- Turn off the TV on a weekend morning and engage in a healthy outdoor activity such as tossing a ball or taking a hike.
- Park the car a few blocks from your child's school and walk with her to the school building. Take time to let her play on the school climbing equipment at the end of the day's classes.
- Make a special kite together and fly it.
- Attend your child's sports activities and cheer him on. Then invite him to come to yours and be your cheerleader.
- Check out or borrow badminton or volleyball equipment from the local YMCA, public library, or other community agency. Find folks to join your family in a game or two.

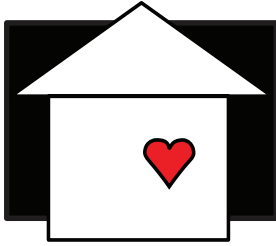
Strengthen "family glue" for a healthy, happy home.

As the family leader, be the best "healthy habits" role model you can be. Most important, build a strong bond with your child. Set and enforce firm, reasonable limits. Praise your child for tasks well done. Encourage family meals with nutritious foods, and focus on health and an active life, not diets. Remember, your child learns by watching you. Small changes can make a BIG difference over time!

Remember,



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Readings and Resources

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USDA, Food and Nutrition Service for the source of the heading, "Move More, Sit Less," p. 6. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/eat-smartplayhardeducators/materials/material.asp?material_id=271&PROCESS=Y&F_TOPIC_ID=3&F_FORMAT_CATEGORY_ID=&F_AUDIENCE_ID=2&F_IS_SPANISH=&F_MATERIAL_SEARCHWORDS=move+more+sit+less&F_MATERIAL_SEARCHWORD_TYPE=ALL