

parent tips

Making Healthier Food Choices

You want to give your family the best that you can. Here are some tips to help you make healthier foods for your family.



The 2010 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans describe a healthy diet as one that:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, sodium (salt), and added sugars.
- Stays within your calorie needs.

Learn more about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans at www.DietaryGuidelines.gov.

There are lots of small changes you can make to help your family eat healthy—at home and when you're out.

Making healthy choices at home

Tips for reducing fat

- Try baking, broiling, boiling, or microwaving instead of frying.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk products, salad dressings, and mayonnaise.
- Add salsa on a baked potato instead of butter or sour cream.
- Remove skin from poultry (like chicken or turkey) and do not eat it.
- Cool soups and gravies and skim off fat before reheating them.

Tips for reducing sugar

- Serve fruit instead of cookies or ice cream for dessert.
- Eat fruits canned in their own juice rather than syrup.
- Reduce sugar in recipes by 1/4 to 1/3. If a recipe says 1 cup, use 2/3 cup.
- Use vanilla, cinnamon, or nutmeg to add flavor when sugar is reduced.

Healthier snack ideas

- Toss sliced apples, berries, bananas, or whole-grain cereal on top of fat-free or low-fat yogurt.
- Put a slice of fat-free or low-fat cheese on top of whole-grain crackers.
- Make a whole-wheat pita pocket with hummus, lettuce, tomato, and cucumber.
- Pop some fat-free or low-fat popcorn.
- Microwave or toast a soft whole grain tortilla with fat-free or low-fat cheese and sliced peppers and mushrooms to make a mini-burrito or quesadilla.
- Drink fat-free or low-fat chocolate milk (blend it with a banana or strawberries and some ice for a smoothie).

Be sure to watch portion size. Check the **We Can!** Web site at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> for more healthy eating tips!

Making healthy choices when dining out

Ordering healthier

When you are picking food, choose items that have less fat or added sugar. Or ask for a low-fat or low-sugar substitution. When you order:

- Choose foods that are steamed, broiled, baked, roasted, poached, or lightly sautéed or stir-fried.
- Ask for fat-free or low-fat milk instead of cream for coffee or tea.
- Pick food without butter, gravy, or sauces—or ask to have the food without it.
- Choose a fat-free, light, or low-fat salad dressing.
- Ask for salad dressing on the side—use only some of it.

- Pick drinks without added sugar, like water, fat-free or low-fat milk, unsweetened tea, or diet iced-tea, lemonade, or soda.

Eating healthier

You can make healthy choices during your meal by doing the following:

- Trim fat from poultry or meat.
- Do not eat the skin on chicken or turkey.
- Share your meal, or take half home for later.
- Skip dessert or order fruit.
- Split dessert with a friend.



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We Can! is a program from the National Institutes of Health that offers resources for parents, caregivers and communities to help children 8-13 years old stay at a healthy weight through eating right, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time.

To learn more, go to <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> or call 1-866-35-WECAN.

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UPMC HEALTH PLAN

To learn more about **We Can!** Pittsburgh, visit <http://www.upmchealthplan.com/about/wecan.html>