

Healthy Eating

Tips for getting your child to eat

To Learn More

If you have questions about your child's diet please call:

- Clinical Nutrition Services 206-987-4758
- Your Child's Registered Dietitian:

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers 206-987-2280 (TTY)

What is the parent's job for meal times?

1. Plan 3 meals and 3 snacks daily:
 - Select and get food.
 - Prepare and present the food in ways your child can eat.
 - Offer solid foods before liquids.
2. Establish times for meals and snacks.
 - Offer nothing between the meal and snack times.
 - Allow a reasonable amount of time to finish the meal or snack: 10 minutes for a snack and 20 minutes for a meal. If the food is not touched after 10-15 minutes, or your child is playing and not eating, remove the food and say that it looks like they are not hungry. The meal is over until the next meal or snack time.
3. Make family mealtimes pleasant.
 - Plan to eat as a family for as many meals as possible.
 - Model good behavior at the table.
 - Talk about anything *EXCEPT*:
 - How much your child eats,
 - What your child eats,
 - What your child has eaten before.
 - Let your child feed themselves as much as possible. A plastic sheet (splat mat) under the highchair will catch any mess. Wipe your child's mouth and clean up only when the meal or snack is over.
 - Do not coax, beg, bribe (reward), force-feed, or play games.
 - Do not find another food if your child refuses to eat.
 - Do not act concerned over what your child eats or does not eat.

What is your child's job at meal times?

1. To eat or not to eat.

Excellent Resource: How to Get Your Child to Eat, But Not Too Much, by Ellen Satter, R.D., A.C.S.W., Bulling Publishing, 1987.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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