



Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation
kidseatright.org

Positive, Healthful Habits: August Is Kids Eat Right Month™

The 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* noted that some school-aged children are not eating enough of the recommended amounts of certain food groups. As a result, they may not be consuming the nutrients they need to support their growing bodies or engaging in the physical activity they need to stay healthy.

Parents and caregivers can play a big role in children's nutrition and health, teaching kids about healthful foods, being a good role model and making sure physical activity is incorporated into each day.

August, which is Kids Eat Right Month™, is a great time to reevaluate your family's eating and physical activity habits and take steps to make positive, healthful changes. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is encouraging families to take the following steps:

Shop Smart. To encourage a healthful lifestyle, get your children involved in selecting the food that will appear at the breakfast, lunch or dinner table.

Cook Healthy. Involve your child in the preparation of meals with age-appropriate tasks. They will learn about food and may even be enticed to try new foods they helped prepare.

Eat Right. Sit down together as a family to enjoy a wonderful meal and the opportunity to share the day's experiences with one another. Family meals encourage healthful family relationships and good eating habits.

Healthful Habits. You can help kids form great, healthful habits by setting a good example. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables, choose lean protein foods, and make at least half the grains your family eats whole grains. For beverages, drink water or milk over drinks with added sugars, and opt for calcium-rich foods with meals and snacks.

Get Moving. Aside from being a great way to spend time together, regular physical activity is vital to strengthen muscle and bones, promote a healthy body weight, develop social skills and build self-esteem. Preschool children are encouraged to be active throughout the day, and older children and adolescents need at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity daily, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (2nd ed.).

Get Talking. Eating right can sometimes be a challenge for kids, particularly if they are picky eaters, but experts say that a conversation can help. Talk to your children about the foods they enjoy and introduce them to new foods from a variety of cultures to expand all of your horizons.

"Together with your children, find ways to help them enjoy the textures, flavors and nutritional benefits of healthful and tasty foods at every meal, without using pressure or bribes to take bites," says Amy Reed, registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy spokesperson.

Learn more at eatright.org/for-kids or consult a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area by visiting "Find a Nutrition Expert" at eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert.