

Eat Smart from a Young Age



Proper chewing is the first step to healthy growth

Eating and chewing require using the same muscles for speech and language. Chewing therefore helps train a child to control these muscles – coordinating the lips, tongue and the lower jaw – which prepares them for mastering pronunciation.¹¹



Introduce solid foods to enhance nutritional intake

As the baby grows up, you should gradually add solid food into their everyday meals. When to give solid food depends on your baby's condition, but most can begin to take solid food at around 6 months of age.¹² Mashed or minced food is ideal as soft food is easier to swallow and digest. From thereafter, you can gradually increase the size of food and add in different textures, such as moving from mash to grinded and cubed food.¹²



Lightly-seasoned foods for better health



As their sense of taste develops, children may prefer certain flavours over others.¹³ Parents can still help their children establish the habit to choose healthy foods – while you start to introduce solid foods into their diet, you can prepare a variety of fresh foods without adding seasoning in to help them develop a preference for healthy foods (such as vegetables).

Eating healthily early on benefits your child's health in the long run – it can help reduce the risk of obesity and other associated conditions, such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.²

Vital nutrients

Vitamin A is important for the development of vision and the immune system, as well as the growth of children. **Vitamin A** deficiency may cause damage to their eyesight, slowed growth and an increased risk of illnesses and infections.^{14,15}

Vitamin C is an essential nutrient for a child's growth and for maintaining healthy body cells. A lack of **vitamin C** may lead to scurvy and lower the body's ability to fight infections.^{14,16}



Prepare a Proper Eating Environment

Parents serve as role models for their children, so it is extremely important to prepare a healthy eating environment and set a good example.

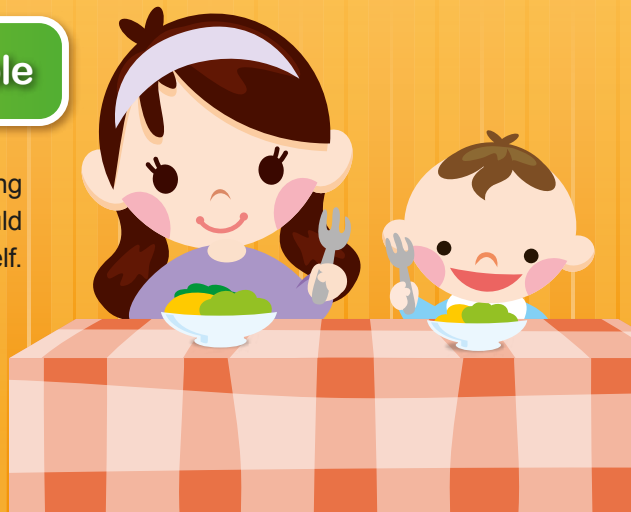


A relaxed and happy eating experience

Having regular and rationed meals can help build a healthy eating environment and enhance your child's appetite. Reducing unnecessary disturbances during meal time (such as switching off the television and removing toys) can foster interactions among family members and make eating a more joyful experience.^{7,17,18}

Set a good example

Children learn through imitating others. As role models, you should avoid being picky eaters yourself. You can also try out new foods and flavours with your children.¹⁸



Let your child make their own choices

Provide more food choices for your child, encourage them to pick healthy options, respect their decisions and allow them to select the amount they want to eat. Do not force them to eat. This can help cultivate good eating habits. When trying new recipes, make it a few more times so it is easier for your child to accept the new foods.^{7,17}



Vital nutrients

Vitamin D is important in maintaining calcium and phosphorus balance in the body, which helps keep a child's bones and teeth healthy. A lack of **vitamin D** may lead to rickets.¹⁹

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that shields our body from free radicals. Low intake of **vitamin E** may cause muscle and nerve problems.^{14,20}

Calcium strengthens the bones and keeps our teeth healthy. It is an essential mineral in many metabolic processes and can also help prevent tooth decay. **Calcium** deficiency may hinder bone development which may lead to rickets.^{14,21-23}



Join in the Fun of Exploring Together



Count your children in

Children like to interact with adults. You can let your children join in with buying and preparing ingredients, such as going to the supermarket and cooking together, or you can allow them to choose their favourite healthy food for lunch.¹⁸



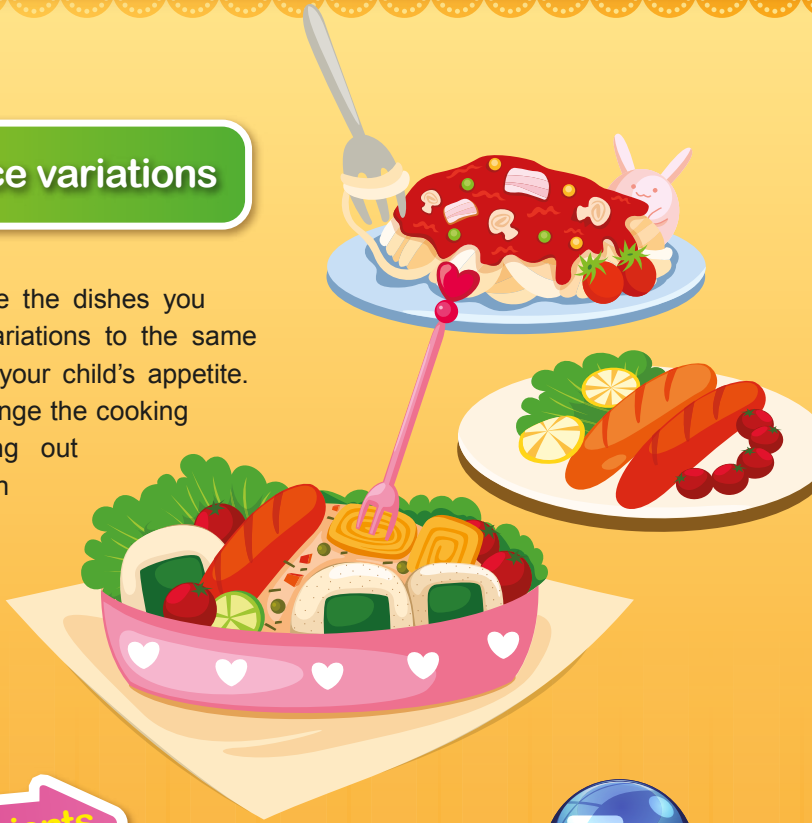
Eat at home more often



Eating at home not only provides healthier food, but also allows you to discover more recipes and cooking methods.¹⁸ It also means you are free to choose more diversified ingredients to achieve a balanced diet.

Introduce variations

You can decorate the dishes you cook or make variations to the same dish to increase your child's appetite. You can also change the cooking methods to bring out different tastes in each ingredient.



Vital nutrients

Zinc is a mineral that is very important to the growth and immunity of children. A deficiency not only may lead to impaired growth, it may even cause damage to the immune system, increasing the risk of infections.²⁴

Iron is responsible for transporting oxygen from the lungs to the body and plays a key role in keeping us healthy. **Iron** is also an essential ingredient for producing haemoglobin. Without enough **iron**, the production of haemoglobin may decrease, which can cause various health problems including low red blood cell count, fatigue, headache and shortness of breath.^{25,26}

