

As They Grow

Early Learning News for Families of Young Children

UW Extension
Cooperative Extension

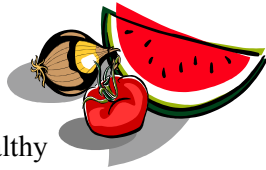
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Young Children and Eating Issues

Promoting Childhood Healthy Eating

Healthy eating nurtures young children's bodies, hearts, and minds. Meals and snack times provide parents and caregivers an opportunity to help children be healthy eaters.

Regularly scheduled meal and snack times help young children learn structure for eating. Children are more likely to eat healthy meals and try new foods if snacks are not offered too close to mealtime.



Tips for setting mealtime and snack schedules:

- ◆ Plan for 3 meals and 1 or 2 snacks each day. Young children often do not eat enough at a meal to stay full until the next mealtime.
- ◆ Make sure that the food offered at each meal and snack contribute toward children's needs.
- ◆ Set reasonable limits for the start and end of a meal. When children are no longer interested in the meal, excuse them from the table.
- ◆ Do not let children have "extras" such as candy or cookies to make up for the meal not eaten.
- ◆ Although schedules are helpful, it is also important to listen to children. For example, if a child says he or she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack. It's important to allow children to recognize when they are hungry or full.

Concerns about overeating

Overeating can lead to overweight children. Being overweight as a child can lead to childhood medical problems: high blood pressure, cholesterol, sleep apnea, and joint problems, among others; as well as, adulthood obesity. Adulthood obesity medical risk factors can include cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

If you are concerned about a child's weight or activity level, talk to a health care professional. Learn what is a healthy weight for young children at each specific age and height. Children are more likely to maintain a healthy weight when meals and snacks occur at regular times. They learn hunger and fullness cues and are less likely to overeat.

Help children know when they've had enough

- ◆ Let them learn by serving themselves. Teach them to take small amounts at first, using small bowls. Tell them they can have more if they are still hungry.
- ◆ Avoid praising a clean plate. Children should stop eating when they are full, rather than when the plate is clean.
- ◆ Reward children with attention and kind words, not food. Show your love with hugs and kisses. Console with hugs and talks.
- ◆ Try not to restrict specific foods. If specific foods become available, children might eat it despite feeling full. This can lead to a habit of overeating. Also don't restrict sweets or other treats as a punishment for bad behavior.
- ◆ Use phrases that help not hinder when helping children know when they've had enough. (*See attached insert for specific phrases.*)

Tips to limit overeating:

- ▶ Limit fast food and processed foods.
- ▶ Plan active, fun activities throughout each day.
- ▶ Use skim or low-fat milk products after age 2 or 3.
- ▶ Skip fried foods.
- ▶ Substitute lower-fat sources of protein, i.e. chicken, fish and beans for red meat, as often as possible.
- ▶ Use unsweetened juice only — no fruit drinks.
- ▶ Switch from juice to water.
- ▶ Provide healthy snacks including: fresh fruit; wholegrain crackers, bagels, and rolls; cheese; yogurt; applesauce (avoid added sugar); dry cereal with low sugar content; and homemade cookies with wholesome ingredients.



For more information about young children and eating issues, check out www.MyPyramid.gov

References: Zero to Three. *Healthy from the Start*. www.zerotothree.org
Brazelton, T. Berry. 2004. *Feeding the Brazelton Way. Follow a Meal and Snack Schedule. Help Them Know When They've Had Enough*. www.MyPyramid.gov

Hamburger Soup

Makes 5 servings. Nutrition Information - 392 calories, 17 grams of fat per slice

Ingredients:

- √ 1 pound ground beef or cooked leftover meat loaf or roast beef
- √ 2 cups potatoes, diced
- √ 1 cup carrots, sliced
- √ 1 cup celery, chopped
- √ 1 cup onions, chopped
- √ 1 can (46 ounces) tomato juice
- √ 2 cups water
- √ salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Brown ground beef; drain off fat.
2. Combine meat, vegetables, tomato juice and water in large pot..
3. Simmer for 1¼ hours or until vegetables are tender.

From UWEX Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, "How Food Affects You," 2006.

Provided by: UW-Extension, Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program, 1220 Mound Ave, Racine, WI 53404 (262) 635-6824.

UW-Extension Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

- ◇ **Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome—Mary Lofty, Trainer, Lofty Learning**
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 6-8 PM — **Ives Grove Office Complex**, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant
This training is required of all providers and employees of providers who have any contact with children under the age of five (5). This includes, cooks, drivers, clerical and cleaning staff. Parents and those interested in family issues may register by calling **262 886-8460** by **Jan. 20**. To receive **Registry Credit or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order** to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of **Jan. 20**. See flyer for detailed information or contact, Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262 833-8732.
- ◇ **Racine County Resources & The Registry — Tina Ginner, Early Care and Education Training Coordinator**
Tuesday, Feb. 24, 6-8 PM — **Ives Grove Office Complex**, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant.
Participants will receive the Racine County Family Resource Directory and 3 UW-Extension Parenting Newsletters—40 issues in all. A 4Cs representative will discuss changes at The Registry. To receive **Registry Credit or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order** to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of **Feb. 17**. See flyer for detailed information or contact, Tina Ginner, 262 886-8492.

Racine County UW-Extension - Family Living Programs

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