

# Healthy Habits for Healthy Homes

Kids  
CanDo  
it!



## Breakfast Power

Eating breakfast is essential to your whole family's health! A healthy breakfast helps adults think better at work and helps students learn better in school. Breakfast also helps keep people from overeating later on in the day. Make your breakfast count!

- Choose cereals with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving
- Top whole grain waffles or pancakes with fresh fruit and yogurt
- Add protein to the morning with low-fat cottage cheese or lean meats

## Skip the Pop

Did you know that a 20-ounce soda contains 17 teaspoons of sugar? That's over a 1/3 of a cup! That's over 250 calories! Soda, along with other sugary beverages, should be limited to rare occasions. Drinking milk with meals and water with snacks is a healthy habit for your whole family to get in to. 100% fruit juice is okay, but because it's high in calories, limit intake to about 1 cup a day. You can also add variety with sugar-free teas and low-calorie flavored waters.

## Tune Out

Did you know that watching TV 10+ hours per week has a negative effect on school performance? That's one reason that experts recommend limiting total screen time, which includes TV, computer, and video games, to less than 2 hours per day. Screen time is also associated with obesity and violence. You can reduce screen time by setting limits and sticking to them. Take the TV out of the bedroom and leave the TV off during dinner. Make a family routine of going for a walk or playing a game after dinner instead of turning on the TV.

## Add 2000 Steps

The average Coloradoan only gets about 7,000 of the recommended 10,000 steps a day. Do you know how many steps you get? Wear a pedometer or step counter and find out! If you're below 10,000 steps a day, aim for adding 2,000 steps a day until you reach your goal. 2,000 steps is about 1 mile, or a 20-minute walk. Making simple changes, like taking the stairs, parking in the furthest spot, or going for a walk during lunch can help you reach your goal.

## Choose Half

Restaurant portion sizes today are often 2 to 3 times bigger than they were 20 years ago. To enjoy eating out without overeating, make a pact to eat only half the food you are served. Share the rest with a friend or take leftovers home. It's helpful to ask for a to-go box right away and package up your meal so you are not tempted to clean your plate.



**CanDo – Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity**

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## Eat a Rainbow

All colors of fruits and vegetables help you maintain a healthy weight by filling you up with nutrients and fiber instead of empty calories. Kids and adults need 4 to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables each day. Be sure to eat a vegetable at each meal and go for fresh fruit or veggie sticks for snacks.

## Family Meals

Eating meals together at home gives parents the chance to help kids develop healthy eating habits. Eating together gives parents the opportunity to role model healthy eating, ensure their kids are eating nutritious foods, and introduce new foods to kids. Make a commitment to eat at least one meal together each day. You might be surprised at the difference in your family's communication, health, happiness, and finances!

## Sleep It Off

Set a regular bedtime and wake time schedule and stick to it! Getting adequate sleep is important for brain function, stress management, and maintaining a healthy weight. So how much do you need?

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Adults                           | 7 – 9 hours   |
| Teens                            | 8 – 9.5 hours |
| Children (ages 5 to 12)          | 10 – 11 hours |
| Preschool Children (ages 3 to 5) | 11 – 13 hours |
| Toddlers (ages 1 to 3)           | 12 – 14 hours |

## Should I Force My Child to Eat?

Children are actually born with a natural sense of wanting to eat and knowing how much they need to eat. Parents play an important role in helping their children establish healthy eating habits, but it is not the parent's responsibility to decide how much food a child should eat. Nutrition experts agree that the role of the parent is to decide what foods are offered, when foods are given, and where foods are eaten. It is the child's role to decide if and how much they will eat. If you're concerned that your child is eating too many sweets, then it's your responsibility to remove the sweets and let your child choose from healthier options when they are hungry.

## Kids & Veggies

Tired of trying to get your kids to eat their veggies? You're not alone! Studies show that it can take up to 15 exposures to a food before a kid will like it. So, if your child doesn't like broccoli now, that's okay. Keep offering the broccoli and encouraging your child to try a bite. Don't ever force your child to eat a food, as this can cause kids to turn against the food even more. Just be patient and persistent. Continue offering the food and be a role model for your child by eating healthy yourself. They'll eventually catch on!

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## 6 Keys to Raising a Healthy Eater

1. **Set regular meal and snack times.**
2. **Be persistent, but not forceful.** Continue to offer healthy foods, even if your children don't like them at first. Encourage your children to try new foods, but do not force them to eat.
3. **Be a role model.** Children follow their parents' lead, so if you eat healthy, so will your kids.
4. **Involve your kids.** Let your kids help choose recipes, go shopping, and prepare meals.
5. **Start with small portions.** It's okay to have seconds if your child says he is still hungry, but start with small servings first.
6. **Give positive rewards.** Avoid using food as a reward. Instead, praise your child's good behavior with positive words, play time, or extra time with you.

## Do You Know What You're Eating?

Read the ingredient list on food labels to help you make healthy food choices. The ingredients are listed in order of most to least by weight. Look for foods that list a whole grain as the first ingredient (i.e. whole wheat or 100% stone ground wheat). Limit foods that list high fructose corn syrup, sugar, or hydrogenated oil in the first few ingredients.

## Healthy Plates

Are you serving healthy, balanced meals? Use the "plate method" to find out! Divide your plate into four equal sections. One corner should be used for protein foods like lean meat, eggs, or beans. Another corner should be used for grains, like pasta, bread, or rice. The other two corners should be filled with fruits and vegetables, like salad, broccoli, or orange slices. Serve a glass of low-fat milk on the side and you have a healthy, well-balanced meal!

## Be a Mindful Eater

Americans often face weight problems because we eat when we are not truly gut hungry. In our society, we eat when we are bored, stressed, emotional, happy, because food is in front of us, or because the food just tastes good. We finish our plates even though we feel uncomfortably full afterwards. To reverse this trend, we need to become mindful eaters. The key to being a mindful eater is listening to your body! Eat when you are hungry, but stop when you begin to feel full. If you find yourself wanting food when you are not truly gut hungry, try something other than eating to fulfill what you really need. If you're stressed, take a walk. If you're bored, call a friend or read a book. Avoid turning to food for every occasion!

## Healthy Eating + Physical Activity = Better Grades!

Studies show that when kids eat healthy and stay active, they do better in school! Healthy foods provide the essential nutrients kids need to concentrate and focus on learning. Being active keeps kids alert and ready to learn. Good nutrition and physical activity also improve kids' overall health, which means they are sick less and miss fewer days of school.

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