

Creating
**Healthy
Routines**
for You and Your
Family
Parent Resource



Healthy eating | Physical activity | Screen time | And more

What's the big deal?

There are four main types of chronic diseases:

- Heart disease (such as heart attacks, stroke and high blood pressure)
- Cancers
- Respiratory disease (such as asthma)
- Diabetes

These are slow to develop, often take years or decades to emerge and cannot be passed from person to person. How we balance our lifestyles often contribute to their development.

Unhealthy eating and physical inactivity are risk factors common to the major chronic diseases. By balancing a healthy diet and physical activity with a healthy sleep routine, you and your family can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. Working towards a healthy routine as a family can promote lifelong health habits that will help to build and maintain a healthy body and mind.

Healthy routines:

- Help friends and family spend more time together.
- Build children's confidence, knowledge and skills.
- Enhance children's ability to learn.

Healthy kids have more energy to be physically active and are better prepared to learn. Healthy food and drink choices, daily physical activity and proper sleep, will help children of all ages and abilities to build and maintain a healthy body and mind.

Follow up with your health care provider if you have specific needs and develop a routine that works for you!



Healthy eating

Balance meals and snacks!

Eating healthy with Canada's Food Guide



- Canada's Food Guide describes what type of food is part of healthy eating and includes foods from three food groupings: **vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods, and protein foods.**
- Aim for meals and snacks to include mostly vegetables and fruits.
- Include protein foods, especially those that come from plants, like beans, legumes, or tofu.
- Include whole grain foods such as brown rice, whole grain pasta, or bread.

Enjoying healthy meals and snacks using Canada's Food Guide will help you to have energy all day long, stay alert and think clearly, and get the nutrients you need to stay healthy.

Healthy snacks include vegetables and fruits, and at least a whole grain or protein food or both.

Examples:

Fruit and yogurt parfait: sliced banana, fresh or frozen berries + plain, low fat yogurt + whole grain oats or cereal

Veggies and dip: mini carrots + hummus

Egg and veggie scramble: fresh or frozen vegetables + low fat milk + scrambled eggs

Healthy meals include vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods.

Examples:

Wraps/sandwiches: lettuce and sliced tomatoes/peppers + whole grain tortilla + grilled chicken breast

Quinoa salad: fresh or frozen vegetables + quinoa + diced tofu + canned beans, drained and rinsed

Cheesy broccoli toast: fresh or frozen broccoli + 1-2 slices of whole grain bread + low fat cheddar cheese, grated

Examples of healthy food choices:

Vegetable and fruit	Whole grain foods	Protein foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple Slices • Banana • Berries • Broccoli • Cauliflower • Celery • Grapes • Leafy greens/salad • Mini carrots • Orange slices • Cherry tomatoes • Cabbage • Pears • Cucumber • Mango • Red, Yellow, or Green Peppers <p>(Choose fresh when you can, but frozen and canned are also great choices.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain flat bread, sliced bread, pita, wraps/tortillas, bagels, crackers • Whole grain pasta • Whole grain brown or wild rice • Whole grain couscous, quinoa • Whole grain oats/oatmeal (cereals) <p>(Choose lower fat and lower sodium options.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beans, peas, or lentils • Canned tuna or salmon packed in water • Hummus • Tofu • Hard boiled eggs • Cooked chicken, turkey, or ham • Lower fat cheese (20% M.F. or less) • Lower fat yogurt/dip (2% M.F. or less) • White, unsweetened low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage* <p>*These are acceptable drinks, however choose water first, as it is the best thirst quencher.</p>

Five ways to help your family balance healthy meals and snacks...

1. Ask your children

- You decide which healthy foods to offer. Let your children decide which of these foods they will eat and how much.
- Have children try new foods at home before sending them to school.
- When grocery shopping, let your child pick a new vegetable or fruit to try.



2. Keep mealtimes free of pressure

- Serve new foods in small amounts with familiar food when your child is hungry.
- Offer new foods on different days, at different meals and in different recipes.
- It can take at least 10 times before they may try a new food being offered to them and like it.
- Mealtime is a great way to bring the family together. As a parent or caregiver, you can be a positive role model when you eat together.
- Do you have children who are picky eaters? Help them create positive and healthy eating habits by not using food as a reward, praise, trick, or punishment.



3. Eat at regular times

- Offer meals and 2-3 snacks at regular times each day.



4. Make food exciting to eat!

- Give food fun names such as “x-ray vision carrots.”
- Serve food in fun ways (e.g. cut vegetables/fruit into fun shapes with cookie cutters or make fruit kabobs).
- Have children eat plenty of vegetables and fruits with meals and snacks. Choose different textures, colours, and shapes to fit their taste.



5. Prepare grab and go options

- Keep washed and cut up vegetables in the fridge at eye level for a quick snack.
- Canned or frozen vegetables and fruit are quick and easy, so try to stock up.
- Consider buying precut vegetables and salad mixes for quick and easy additions to any meal.



Choose one idea and start today!



Together is better!

Plan together:



- Children are more likely to eat meals they have helped plan.
- Have children come up with healthy snack and meal ideas using foods they enjoy.

Shop together:



- Remember, you decide which foods come home from the grocery store. Buy foods that you want your children to eat.
- Have children find a new vegetable or fruit that your family can try.

Prepare together:



- Prepare meals and snacks ahead of time with your children. Involving your family in preparing meals can help them to develop healthy eating habits while learning new food skills.

Eat together:



- Allow time for your children to eat breakfast every morning.
- Aim to eat together as a family as much as possible without distractions (e.g. away from the television).
- Involve the whole family in setting the table and cleaning up.



Food skills for all ages

Do your children like to help you in the kitchen? Food skills are a set of necessary skills to prepare safe, nutritious food.

Depending on the age of your child, here are some skills that you can practice doing together.



Age	Food skill
3-4 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove shells from hard boiled eggs.• Pour from a small pitcher or measuring cup.• Help make a simple sandwich or pizza with pre-assembled ingredients.• Take a certain number of carrots or whole wheat bagels out of a bag.
4-6 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure, combine and stir ingredients together.• Slice soft cooked vegetables, soft fruit, cheese or tofu with a plastic knife.
6-8 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safely use simple kitchen equipment (grater, toaster, blender or can opener).• Make a simple whole wheat tortilla wrap.• Invent a fruit salad or smoothie recipe.• Help make a simple breakfast.
8-12 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using a knife with easy to cut foods.• Use the microwave with your help.• Make their own lunch.• Make a fresh vegetable or fruit platter.• Use the stove with supervision to make basic recipes (e.g. omelette or grilled cheese sandwich).
13-18 year olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pack their own lunch for school.• Go through flyers together to create a grocery list.• Involve them in food budgeting.• When shopping, help them to make healthier choices by reading nutrition facts labels.

Rethink your drink!

Rethink
your
drink!

Sugary drinks are the main source of added sugar in the daily diet of children.

Too many sugary drinks can lead to tooth decay and make it harder to be a healthier weight. Obesity puts your child at risk for other health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Do you know how much SUGAR is in your drink?



1 sugar cube = 1 teaspoon of sugar

CHOOSE WATER when you are thirsty



To quench your thirst, make water your drink of choice!

Sugary drinks can include:

- Soda pop/soft drinks
- Fruit flavoured drinks (punch, cocktail, -ade)
- Sports drinks
- Energy drinks
- Vitamin waters
- Sweetened/iced teas
- Hot chocolate
- Speciality/iced coffees

Help your family make healthier drink choices:

- Role model for your children by choosing water first.
- Replace sugary drinks in the fridge with a pitcher of water.
- Pack reusable water bottles in your children's lunches that they can refill at school.
- Encourage your family to eat their vegetables and fruits instead of drinking juice.
- Limit the amount and skip the refills, if you choose a sugary drink.
- White, unsweetened low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage are acceptable drinks. However, choose water first as it is the best thirst quencher.



Physical activity

Move
and play
every
day!

For optimal health benefits, the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines recommend that:

- Preschoolers (aged 3-4 years) spend at least 180 minutes in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play.
- Children and Youth (aged 5-17 years) accumulate at least 60 minutes of heart pumping physical activity per day.

The benefits of physical activity:

- Develops creativity and helps children use their imagination.
- Builds children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Helps children have a healthy body and mind.
- Decreases the risk of future chronic diseases.
- Improves focus, memory and learning.
- Helps develop leadership and group skills.



Many parents believe that children can only be physically active through structured activities like organized sports. However, research shows children are more active through unstructured play.

Examples of unstructured play	Examples of structured play
Walking to school Playing at the park Bike riding Playing tag Playing in the backyard	Team sports Dance lessons Swim class Karate class School sports

Physical literacy

Physical literacy is about having the physical skills, confidence and love of movement to be active for life.

Children need to learn to move just like they need to learn to read and write. They develop physical literacy over time by developing basic movement skills like:

- Crawling
- Walking
- Running
- Jumping
- Hopping
- Stretching
- Throwing
- Catching
- Kicking

Unstructured play gives children a chance to enjoy and practice all the movement skills they've learned.

As children develop movement skills they become more confident in using them. They are also more likely to participate in different physical activities, sports, and games throughout their entire life.

Physical literacy improves physical and emotional wellbeing, cognitive ability, and promotes good health.

Without physical literacy many children become frustrated and withdraw from sports, activities and games.



Make family time active time!

- Be a role model: more active parents have more active kids.
- Ask your children to help pick activities they would like to try.
- As a family, set a physical activity goal, make a plan and track your activity.
- Walk or wheel to and from the places you need to go.
- Walking to and from school will prepare your child to learn during the day.
- Play music and dance.
- Go for a family walk after dinner and discover nature.
- Go for a family bike ride to the park.
- Visit the Durham Region Health Department website at durham.ca/physicalactivity for ideas of free or low-cost activities in your community.

Did you know kids naturally play more actively when they're outdoors? Spend time together outside as a family.



Sedentary time and screen time

**Replace
sedentary
screen time
with active
play!**

Canadian kids are sitting too much and moving too little to reach their full potential. Children and youth face health risks from prolonged sedentary time, and the biggest contributor to sedentary time is screen time. Screen time is time spent on digital screens. This includes televisions, tablets, computers, laptops and smartphones.

***Sedentary time is any
time spent with very
little movement.***

The Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology recommends:

- For children aged 3 - 4 years, no more than 60 minutes of sedentary screen time per day.
- For children aged 5 - 17 years, no more than two hours of recreational screen time per day.



Tips for you and your family to limit sedentary screen time

Be a role model and limit your own screen use

Parents play a major role in supporting healthy behaviours and providing children opportunities for healthy active living.

Set limits and make rules

Make rules about screen time together as a family.

Limit TV watching and video-gaming after school.

Help children to plan active time around the home or outdoors instead!

Make bedrooms and mealtimes screen free

Remove televisions, laptops, smart phones and video games from your child's bedroom.

Turn the television off and put away electronic devices during meals.

Make screen time active time

When screens are being used try to stay active. During movie night or your favourite TV show, challenge the family to see who can do the most push-ups, jumping jacks, or leg lifts during commercial breaks.

**Visit friends
(by walking or
wheeling) instead
of texting them.**

**Set one day a week
or month as a
"screen-free day"
for the whole family.**

Sun safety

Be sun safe!

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Canada and it is mainly caused by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- The UV Index tells you the strength of the sun's daily UV rays - the higher the number, the stronger the sun's rays and the more important it is to protect yourself.
- UV radiation can reflect off surfaces such as water, asphalt, grass, concrete, sand or snow, and this increases the amount of UV radiation that reflects onto your skin.
- Unprotected skin can be damaged in as little as 15 minutes of UV exposure.
- Up to 80% of the sun's rays can pass through light clouds, mist, and fog.

When outside you should always make sure skin is protected.

- Limit outdoor playtime in the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Check daily UV index before outdoor activities.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or baseball cap with flaps that cover the head, neck and ears.
- Wear light coloured and breathable clothing that cover as much skin as possible, or UV protective clothing.
- It's also important to wear close fitting wrap-around sunglasses with UV 400 or 100% UV protection.
- Apply plenty of broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF of 30 or more; re-apply when needed, especially after swimming, sweating or toweling.
- Put sunscreen on at least 20 minutes before going outside. Make sure to check the expiry date and do not use expired sunscreen. Seek shade under tall buildings, umbrellas, sun shelters, trees, or gazebos when possible.
- Some medications make the skin more sensitive to UV radiation – check with your pharmacist.



Sleep



Sleep benefits

Just like healthy eating and physical activity, sleep helps a child's mind and body to grow and be healthy.

Sleep can affect your child's:

- Energy to play and be physically active.
- Ability to cope with feelings and emotions, and make it easier to move between activities.
- Growth and development to have a strong and healthy body.
- Resilience and how well your child can cope with life's ups and downs in a positive way.
- Learning and memory by being more settled and alert in school.
- Immune system to fight off infections and stay healthy.

Try to have the same bedtime and wake up time every day:

- Children (3-4 years old) need 10-13 hours of uninterrupted sleep, which may include a nap.
- Children (5-13 years old) need 9-11 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
- Youth (14-17 years old) need 8 -10 hours of uninterrupted sleep.



Did you know?

Research says that children who do not get the sleep they need are more likely to develop health problems as adults such as:

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Heart problems
- Gain more unhealthy weight

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What can help us sleep?



1. Having the same sleep routine before bed every night can help your child create healthy sleep habits.
2. Keep the sleep area dim and at a comfortable temperature.
3. Tucking your child into bed helps him/her feel secure. Suggest your child to bring a favourite thing to bed, like a teddy bear or special blanket.
4. Reading together is a calming activity. Make a bedtime story part of your child's sleep routine.
5. Include a healthy bedtime snack as part of a planned snacking routine. Some foods or drinks may make it more difficult for your child to sleep (e.g. those high in sugar or caffeine).
6. Have your child brush and floss their teeth before bed.
7. Physical activity is an important way to improve your child's health and sleep habits.
8. Screen time before bed can affect your sleep. Limit access to electronics by turning screens off 2 hours before bedtime.

- Aim for meals and snacks to include mostly vegetables and fruits.
- Include protein foods, especially those that come from plants more often, like beans, legumes or tofu.
- Include whole grain foods such as brown rice, whole grain pasta or bread.

Balance meals and snacks!

Make meal time family time!

Role model making healthy choices!

Rethink your drink!

- Make water the drink of choice for the entire family (e.g. have a cold pitcher of tap water available in your fridge or try adding fruit to water to change up the flavour).
- Carry a reusable water bottle.

- Children aged 2-4 years – limit sedentary screen time to less than 1 hour per day; less is better.
- Children and youth aged 5-17 years – limit recreational screen time to less than 2 hours per day; less is better.

Replace sedentary screen time with active play!

Spend less time sitting!

Be active and play together as a family!

Move and play every day!

- Children aged 3-4 years need at least 180 minutes (3 hours) of physical activity at any intensity spread throughout the day.
- Children and Youth (aged 5-17 years) need to accumulate at least 60 minutes of heart pumping physical activity per day.

- Children aged 3-4 years need 10-13 hours of uninterrupted sleep, which may include a nap.
- Children aged 5-13 years need 9-11 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
- Youth aged 14-17 years need 8-10 hours of uninterrupted sleep.

Get enough sleep

Try to have the same bed and wake-up time every day!

Check daily UV index before outdoor activities!

Be sun safe!

- Have outdoor playtime before 11 a.m. and/or after 3 p.m
- Apply plenty of broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen and lip balm with SPF 30 or more at least 20 minutes before going outside.





HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729
durham.ca/health



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.