

# 10 tips

Nutrition  
Education Series

# cut back on your kid's sweet treats

## 10 tips to decrease added sugars



**Limit the amount of foods and beverages with added sugars your kids eat and drink.** If you don't buy them, your kids won't get them very often. Sweet treats and sugary drinks have a lot of calories but few nutrients. Most added sugars come from sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, juice drinks, cakes, cookies, ice cream, candy, and other desserts.

### 1 serve small portions

It's not necessary to get rid of all sweets and desserts. Show kids that a small amount of treats can go a long way. Use smaller bowls and plates for these foods. Have them share a candy bar or split a large cupcake.

### 2 sip smarter

Soda and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Offer water, 100% juice, or fat-free milk when kids are thirsty.



### 3 use the check-out lane that does not display candy

Most grocery stores will have a candy-free check-out lane to help moms out. Waiting in a store line makes it easy for children to ask for the candy that is right in front of their faces to tempt them.

### 4 choose not to offer sweets as rewards

By offering food as a reward for good behavior, children learn to think that some foods are better than other foods. Reward your child with kind words and comforting hugs, or give them non-food items, like stickers, to make them feel special.

### 5 make fruit the everyday dessert

Serve baked apples, pears, or enjoy a fruit salad. Or, serve yummy frozen juice bars (100% juice) instead of high-calorie desserts.



### 6 make food fun

Sugary foods that are marketed to kids are advertised as "fun foods." Make nutritious foods fun by preparing them with your child's help and being creative together. Create a smiley face with sliced bananas and raisins. Cut fruit into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

### 7 encourage kids to invent new snacks

Make your own snack mixes from dry whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, and unsalted nuts or seeds. Provide the ingredients and allow kids to choose what they want in their "new" snack.



### 8 play detective in the cereal aisle

Show kids how to find the amount of total sugars in various cereals. Challenge them to compare cereals they like and select the one with the lowest amount of sugar.

### 9 make treats "treats," not everyday foods

Treats are great once in a while. Just don't make treat foods an everyday thing. Limit sweet treats to special occasions.

### 10 if kids don't eat their meal, they don't need sweet "extras"

Keep in mind that candy or cookies should not replace foods that are not eaten at meal time.



## More Recipes for You and Your Family to Enjoy!

### Garden Pita Pockets

**What you will need:**

- 1/2 whole-wheat pita
- Mixed leafy green vegetables
- Baby carrots
- Broccoli florets
- 1 tbsp. grated cheddar cheese
- 1 tbsp. salsa
- 1 tbsp. low-fat ranch dressing

**What you will do:**

1. Fill the pita with mixed greens.
2. Add the baby carrots and broccoli florets.
3. Top with cheese, salsa, and/or ranch dressing.

**Note:** Try this recipe with other vegetables from your garden or from the grocery store.

### Trail Mix

**What you will need:**

- 1 tbsp. peanuts
- 1 tbsp. sunflower seeds
- 1 tbsp. raisins
- 1 tbsp. oat cereal pieces
- 1 tbsp. chocolate pieces

**What you will do:**

1. Measure the ingredients and put them into a bag.
2. Mix and enjoy!

**Note:** Try this recipe using other nuts, seeds, or dried fruit.

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

You can make healthy lifestyles enjoyable for the whole family. Create positive attitudes about foods and activities that support a lifetime of good health. The following tips can help you manage food choices for all of your family members.

Offer toddlers familiar foods. Introduce new foods to preschoolers; they are more willing to try them and enjoy practicing their skills with forks and spoons.

Encourage your children to be physically active.

Encourage your children to eat fruits and vegetables, as well as whole-grain breads and crackers.

Set the structure for eating. Make nutritious foods available for meals and snacks.

Encourage your children to learn about and enjoy a variety of foods.

Let your children explore, prepare, and taste new foods at an early age.