



**American
Heart
Association®**

life is why™

Dear Family,

What's for dinner? That simple question can open a host of concerns: Is the food I'm preparing healthy? How much should my child be eating? My child will eat only mac 'n' cheese. Buying healthy foods can be expensive!

Relax! You can serve up healthy food choices that even the pickiest of eaters will savor without breaking your budget. Healthy eating includes **foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat, salt (sodium), and added sugars**. For kids ages 4–18, keep the total fat intake between 25 percent and 35 percent of their calories, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. Offer **whole grains and a variety of fruits and veggies**. Serve **fat-free and low-fat dairy foods**. Limit foods **that are high in saturated fat, trans fat, salt (sodium), and added sugars**. As for the “clean your plate” rule, get rid of it. Overeating is one reason kids get too many calories.

Got a picky eater? **Introduce healthier items into foods your child already likes**: top cereal with fruit, add blueberries to whole-grain pancakes, or shred veggies over rice. **Play the eat-your-colors game** with brightly colored fruits and vegetables, and **include your child in the preparation**—it may make him or her more likely to eat the food. **Don't buy unhealthy foods**. If there are no chips in the house, kids will munch on healthier options instead.

Sincerely,

teacher

Your child is a participant in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart program. The AHA has five priority messages for your family:

Physical Activity



Healthy Eating

Sodium

Sodas and Other
Sugary Drinks

Tobacco/Smoking



On a budget? Try these **healthy choices that are less than \$1 per serving**. Then go to the American Heart Association website at heart.org/HealthierKids to find more.

- **Apples, bananas, oranges, and pears**—Eat one as a snack or serve it in a fruit salad with dinner. Bananas are tasty in smoothies, and a pear served with cheese makes a tasty appetizer. Cut it up to serve as finger food. One piece of medium-size fruit equals one serving.
- **Baby carrots**—Eat them as a snack, include them in a stew, or serve them in a veggie platter.
- **Fat-free or low-fat yogurt**—Eat it as a snack or use it in a smoothie. A six-ounce container usually is one serving. Read the Nutrition Facts label and select a yogurt without a lot of added sugars.
- **Sweet potato**—Bake it, mash it, steam it! One medium sweet potato is one serving.
- **Oatmeal**—Serve it hot for breakfast. One serving is a half cup.
- **Frozen or fresh corn on the cob**—This is a quick, kid-friendly side dish. One ear of corn is one serving.

Good to Know!

Chew on this: **One in three American kids and teens is overweight or obese**. This contributes to a wide range of health problems for kids, including **high blood pressure, diabetes, and high blood cholesterol levels**. Excess weight at young ages also has been linked to earlier death rates as adults. Teach your child good habits that will last a lifetime!