



5 Ways to Practice Mindful Eating

The art of mindful eating allows your child to develop a healthy ability to pay better attention to his hunger and fullness cues. This is a valuable skill for kids to learn at a young age, because even as preschoolers they're already developing the eating habits they will take with them into adulthood. Use these five tips to encourage healthy eating habits, to keep your kids engaged during mealtime and to encourage mindful eating.

1 Avoid screens at the table

During meal and snack times, have everyone sit down at the table without any screens (including TV, phones, tablets, etc.) or toys. Distraction-free eating allows kids to learn to enjoy the taste and flavors of their food and to recognize when they are hungry or full. If your child is eating in front of a screen or is busy playing while snacking, she is probably eating quickly too. By eating quickly, she doesn't really taste her food and is more likely to overeat.

If there are other distractions around, such as pets or even a window where she can see kids playing outside, you may want to keep pets in another



room during mealtime or move your child's seat at the table to help eliminate the distraction.

2 Sit down and eat together

There are the kids who never sit down at the table for meal or snack times and then there are the kids who do. In order to get your kids to be the ones who do sit down to eat, you need to make that a priority and a habit. It may be challenging at first, but by consistently reminding your children that "when we eat, we sit down at the table" and making it a practice, they'll eventually realize that's the way things are going to be.

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Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



Broccoli

- California is the number one commercial producer of broccoli in the U.S., producing more than 90% of the nation's crop.
- Over 2,000 years ago the son of Roman Emperor Tiberius, loved broccoli so much he refused to eat anything else for an entire month.
- As of 2018, the average person in the U.S. ate almost 6 pounds of fresh broccoli per year.
- Thomas Jefferson, was an avid gardener and experimented with broccoli seeds brought over from Italy in the late 1700s.
- Broccoli belongs to the cabbage family and it is a cool season crop, although it is available year round.
- Broccoli is delicious raw, steamed, stir-fried and roasted. Try adding it fresh or frozen to soups, salads, pastas, omelets and casseroles.
- Look for broccoli with a firm stem and tight, compact, dark green florets.
- Known as the "Crown Jewel of Nutrition" broccoli is rich in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. It is an excellent source of vitamin C, K, folate and chromium. There are 34 calories in 100 grams, about 3.5 ounces, of broccoli.

CDPH, justfunfacts.com

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— Continued from front page

When this becomes a part of your routine, sitting down and eating together as a family is a great way to introduce new foods, since your child is much more likely to eat the same healthy foods you do when he sees you enjoying them. This is also a great opportunity to keep your children engaged with conversation. Ask open-ended questions, such as, “What was the most fun thing you did at school today?” Keeping conversations positive and light at the dinner table will make mealtime more enjoyable for everyone and you might be able to learn something about your child’s day.

3 Teach table manners

Even young children can learn table manners and communicate when they want more food or are finished eating. Don’t be alarmed if your child throws food, burps or makes a huge mess and spills. It’s going to happen, and he’s probably doing it because he thinks it’s funny and/or wants to get a reaction from you. In these instances, calmly and consistently remind kids about good table manners, and encourage them to say “excuse me” and to help clean up their mess.

4 Talk about what they are eating and how their bellies feel

To encourage mindfulness, talk to your children about the foods they are eating. Ask them about what colors they see and what it tastes like. Talk to them about how the healthy foods they are eating can help make them strong, run fast and jump high!

You also want to talk to them about how their bellies feel. When your kids are in tune with how their bellies feel, and if they are eating slowly, they can better recognize their hunger and fullness cues. This helps teach your child the healthy ability to regulate her intake and to avoid overeating. If your little one is excited to get back to playing and is eating faster than you’d like her to, remind her to slow down and listen to her tummy.

5 Avoid eating on the go or in the car

This is probably one of the most difficult mindfulness practices for families today. We’re constantly running from

one practice to the next or from one errand to another, so sometimes eating on the go or in the car simply has to happen. The trick is to try to not make a habit of mindless snacking just because you’re in the car or at the grocery store trying to keep your child quiet and occupied. This practice teaches your child to replace boredom with food and to ignore her hunger and fullness cues.

— Developed by *Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life*. Children’s created *Strong4Life.com*, a free resource to help busy parents raise healthier families.



KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby

NOT ALL BIRTH DEFECTS can be prevented. However, you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby by managing health conditions and adopting healthy behaviors before and during pregnancy.

Taking care of yourself and doing what's best for you, is also best for your baby!



against serious diseases. Get a flu shot and whooping cough vaccine (also called Tdap) during pregnancy to help protect yourself and your baby.

Flu: You can get the flu shot before or during pregnancy.

Whooping Cough: You can get the whooping cough vaccine in the last three months of pregnancy.

1 Take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.

Folic acid is important because it can help prevent some major birth defects of the baby's brain and spine. These birth defects develop very early during pregnancy when the neural tube, which forms the early brain and the spinal cord—does not close properly. Start taking folic acid at least one month before becoming pregnant and continue during pregnancy.

Most vitamins sold in the United States have the recommended amount of folic acid women need each day. Check the label on the bottle to be sure it contains 100% of the daily value (DV) of folic acid, which is 400 mcg.

Eat fortified foods. You can find folic acid in some breads, breakfast cereals and corn masa flour. Be sure to check the nutrient facts label and look for one that has "100%" next to folic acid.

2 Book a visit with your healthcare provider before stopping or starting any medicine.

Many women need to take medicine to stay healthy during pregnancy. If you are planning to become pregnant, discuss your current medicines with a healthcare provider, such as your doctor or pharmacist. Creating a treatment plan for your health condition before you are pregnant can help keep you and your developing baby healthy.

3 Stay up-to-date with all vaccines, including the flu shot.

Vaccines help protect you and your developing baby

4 Before you get pregnant, try to reach a healthy weight.

Obesity increases the risk for several serious birth defects and other pregnancy complications. If you are underweight, overweight or have obesity, talk with your healthcare provider about ways to reach and maintain a healthy weight before you get pregnant. Focus on a lifestyle that includes healthy eating and regular physical activity.

5 Boost your health by avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Alcohol: There is no known safe amount of alcohol during pregnancy or when trying to get pregnant. Alcohol can cause problems for a developing baby throughout pregnancy, so it's important to stop drinking alcohol when you start trying to get pregnant.

Tobacco: Smoking causes cancer, heart disease and other major health problems. Smoking during pregnancy can also harm the developing baby and can cause certain birth defects.

Other Drugs: Using certain drugs during pregnancy can cause health problems for a woman and her developing baby. If you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant and using drugs, reach out for help.

— Adapted from *Healthychildren.org* or *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

Caramelized Tofu and Broccoli Stir-Fry

Extra-firm tofu	16 ounces	Red pepper flakes, crushed (optional)	¼ tsp
Coconut or peanut oil	2 Tbsp	Broccoli, cut into florets	2 cups
Garlic, minced	1 tsp	Red bell pepper, cut into thin 1-inch long strips	½
Pecans, finely chopped	½ cup	Red onion, thinly sliced	½
Brown sugar	2 Tbsp	Brown rice, cooked	2 cups
Soy sauce, reduced-sodium	3 Tbsp		

1. Drain the tofu and wrap it in a clean dishcloth to draw out the extra water. Cut the tofu into three crosswise slices, and cut those slices into 3 or 4 long strips.
2. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the tofu strips and cook them without stirring for about 3 minutes until browned on the bottom. Flip the tofu (tongs work well for this) and add the garlic and pecans, stirring one minute until the garlic becomes fragrant.
3. Add the brown sugar, 1½ Tbsp soy sauce and the red pepper flakes and stir until blended.
4. Remove the tofu and nuts to a plate, allowing some of the sauce to remain in the pan. Add the broccoli, bell pepper, onions and the remaining soy sauce. Cook 3 to 4 minutes until tender. Add tofu and other ingredients back into the skillet, heat through, and serve immediately with brown rice.

Yield: 4 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate, vegetable & whole grain-rich

—*Thekidscookmonday.org*

Winter Citrus and Roasted Beet Salad

Beets	2	Lemon juice	2 Tbsp
Olive oil, (divided)	⅓ cup + 1 tsp	Dijon mustard	1 Tbsp
Salt and pepper	to taste	Blood oranges or tangerines	3
Shallot, minced	1	Mixed baby greens	3 cups
Orange juice	2 Tbsp	Pecans, toasted	¼ cup

1. Cut the ends off of the beets, then place on a square of heavy duty foil. Drizzle with 1 tsp olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Fold foil to make a packet. Place packet on a baking sheet and roast at 400°F until beets are very tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool, then peel beets using your hands. Cut into ½-inch pieces.
2. To make the vinaigrette, add shallot, orange juice, lemon juice and mustard to a small bowl. Whisk together and season with salt and pepper. Pour remaining olive oil in a steady stream, whisking constantly until emulsified. Set aside.
3. Peel oranges or tangerines and slice crosswise into ½-inch slices. Remove seeds as needed. Add greens, beets and half the orange slices to a large serving bowl. Toss with half the vinaigrette. Add more vinaigrette if desired. Garnish with remaining orange slices and pecans.

Yield: 8 serving

Meets requirement for vegetable

—*Adapted from ImperfectRecipes.com*

ACTIVITY CORNER



Indoor Beach Ball Games

BEACH BALLS can be very entertaining, plus they get children up, moving around and developing their gross motor skills while burning off some of that rambunctious energy.

Don't Let The Ball Touch The Ground:

The rules of this classic game are simple—have children hit a beach ball in the air and not let it touch the ground. For an extra challenge, use more than one beach ball or have children keep one hand behind their back. This game is great for improving hand-eye coordination.

Stuffed Animals Game: Pick a favorite stuffy and use it to hit the beach ball. It's surprising how this one simple variation can boost engagement!

Beach Ball Foot Balance: For a real challenge, have children lie on the ground with their legs up in the air and try to balance the ball on their feet. It's not an easy task and requires a lot of concentration. It's also a great core workout!

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Food Q. Where did the spaghetti go to dance?
Funny A. The meat ball!