

Creating A Positive Eating Environment



The American Heart Association is working to help kids and families live heart-healthy lives. Use the resources found on our website to help your family live longer, healthier lives. As a parent, you want the best for your child. Every parent does. And we can help. Find out what we're doing to improve children's health and create a nation of healthier kids through the several Kids Programs.

Check out our website: <http://www.heart.org/>



Healthy and Happy Eating Environments

Having a positive eating environment is key to building healthy habits. Mealtime is the perfect opportunity to create a happy and healthy environment. Create a positive environment by:

- Eating healthy foods and beverages;
- Eating meals together as a family;
- Talking about the day and things that happened;
- Have a relaxed and calm environment; and
- Turn off electronic devices such as phones, television, computers, etc.



Taste Test Ideas

Creating a healthy environment can be difficult for children when encouraging new foods, here are some examples of ways to introduce them:

- **Go Exotic**— try new exotic fruits like a starfruit, pomegranate or passion fruit.
- **Morning Munchers**— taste different whole grain cereals.
- **Cracker Comparison**— try different types of whole grain crackers.
- **Oatmeal Toppers**— try different mix-ins and topping on your oatmeal such as fruits, nuts and seasonings.
- **Sugar Smart Drinks**— infuse water with different flavors using oranges, lemons, strawberries, mint or cucumbers.



Reference: <http://acdkids.org/>

Let's Eat Together!

Eating meals family-style allows your family to eat in a relaxing and comfortable environment. Use meal time as a chance to build healthy habits and eat together as a family. Try family-style dining by:

- Having children help set the table;
 - Sitting down together as a family;
 - Allowing your child to serve themselves;
 - Encouraging your child to try new foods; and
 - Talk about your day and the foods you are eating.



Books to Encourage Healthy Habits:

- **Eat by Roberta Grobel-Intrater:** A group of babies enjoys different foods— along with making a big mess on their faces as well.
- **Mealtime by Elizabeth Verdick:** Toddlers learn healthy habits and positive mealtime routines as they eat with their family.
- **Oliver's Fruit Salad by Vivian French:** Oliver loves helping his grandfather grow and pick fruit from the garden, but he won't eat any of it. His mother tries to encourage him but it doesn't work. That is until Grandpa comes to visit and gets Oliver to make a big colorful fruit salad.

