

# Healthy eating for school-age children

## prevention

### Help children make healthy choices

- ◆ Encourage children to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full.
- ◆ Plan regular family meals – healthy eating habits begin at home.
- ◆ Focus on small, gradual changes in eating to create healthy habits that will last a lifetime.
- ◆ Encourage healthy, balanced eating for children; avoid diets.
- ◆ Allow children to enjoy a favourite high fat/sugar food occasionally, in limited portions.
- ◆ Avoid using food as a reward or punishment.
- ◆ Keep the TV off during meals and avoid snacking in front of the screen.
- ◆ Talk to a Registered Dietitian if you are concerned about your child's eating habits or weight.

### Tips for parents and caregivers

Healthy eating and physical activity help children grow, learn and build strong bones and muscles. As a parent or caregiver, you have a great opportunity to be a role model of positive behaviours and a healthy lifestyle.

Healthy food choices and regular physical activity may help children to maintain a healthy weight and prevent health problems including type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adults, but increasing numbers of overweight children and teens are being diagnosed with this chronic disease.

### The benefits of eating well

- ◆ Good health
- ◆ More energy
- ◆ Healthy body weight
- ◆ Lower risk of disease
- ◆ Improved concentration
- ◆ Strong heart, muscles and bones

### Healthy eating

*Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* suggests that everyone eat a wide variety of foods, including vegetables and fruit, whole grains, lower fat dairy products, and lean meats, beans or lentils daily. Children learn by watching and doing, so set a good example. Eat healthy meals and snacks with your children and participate in fun activities together. Use the following tips to encourage healthy habits.

**Helping children learn about healthy eating and healthy choices can lead to a lifetime of good nutrition habits.**



