



# Tuckatalk

## Setting Healthy Habits

It is important to set healthy habits when your child is young. Offer a variety of healthy foods from an early age to give your child the best chance of growing into a good eater.

### Key points:

- You decide **where, when and what** healthy food is offered
- Your child decides **whether and how much** to eat
- Seat your child for meals and snacks
- Provide a variety of food from the 5 food groups
- Be a good role model
- Use positive language at meal times

### WHERE to offer food

- Sit your child at a table for most meals and snacks
- Make sure they are well supported in a chair
- Remove distractions. Turn off the TV and put toys away
- Use a tablecloth or place mats to show when the table is for eating rather than homework or play.

### WHEN to offer food

Children have small stomachs and high energy needs, so they need to eat regularly.

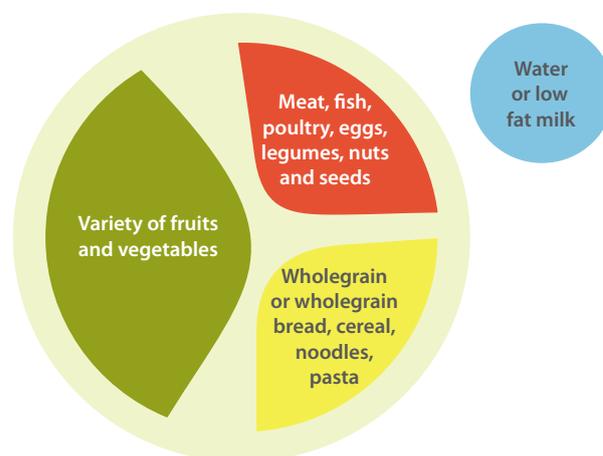
Provide meals and snacks every 2–3 waking hours:

7:30am	Breakfast
10.00am	Morning snack
12.30pm	Lunch
3.30pm	Afternoon snack
6.00pm	Dinner
7.30pm	Evening snack (optional)

### WHAT food to offer and HOW

Children are good at knowing when they are hungry and full.

- Let your child decide how much they want to eat
- It is normal for the amount they eat to vary from meal to meal and day to day
- Provide your child with a variety of food using the plate below as a guide.



*NOTE: Children under 2 years should be offered full cream milk and dairy products.*

*Chips, lollies, biscuits and soft drinks are sometimes food and should not be offered daily.*

# Setting Healthy Habits



## Be a Good Role Model

Children learn how and what to eat by watching those around them. As a parent:

- Avoid showing your food dislikes
- Show that you enjoy eating
- Eat with your child at meals and snacks
- Try new foods with your child and talk to them about the taste, texture, smell and look.

## Language

- Use positive phrases and praise good behaviour
- Avoid questions that can be answered with a 'no', e.g. '**would you like some vegetables?**' (the answer will probably be no)
- Try using '**you can**' at the beginning of sentences to avoid power struggles, e.g. '**you can have some vegetables on your plate**' (your child is more likely to agree).

## Tips for Dealing with Fussy Eaters

- Have a consistent meal and snack routine
- Keep meal times pleasant
- Be realistic about the amount of food offered
- Allow eating methods your child can handle
- **Offer** new foods but do not pressure your child to **try** new foods
- It can take up to 10 tastes (or more!) before a new food is accepted
- Do not short order cook by allowing another meal if your child refuses
- Provide some preferred foods but also offer new or less preferred foods
- Avoid offering the same foods daily, children will tire and eventually refuse the food
- Enjoy your own food — be a good role model.

### Remember:

- New foods will only be accepted if they are offered regularly
- If your child is growing well, happy and energetic, they are likely to be eating enough
- Avoid giving your child food or drinks other than water outside of *planned* meal or snack times
- Avoid pressuring your child to eat new foods
- Eventually your child will learn to eat most foods.

## Where can I find out more information?

### HERE ARE 4 WAYS:

- 1. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** with an ACT Health Community Dietitian by phoning **6207 9977**
- 2. ATTEND** a Coping with Fussy Eater group by calling **6207 9977**
- 3. LOOK** at the Ellyn Satter website **www.ellynsatter.com**
- 4. CHECK OUT** more Tuckatalk factsheets at **www.health.act.gov.au**

