

## Healthy Measures: Top five tips to help your child become a good eater

Mealtimes can be frustrating for young children and their parents, but it doesn't have to be this way. Mealtime can be more pleasant and relaxed by using these five tips:

**1. Offer small amounts of food.** Large portions of food can be overwhelming to a child. Young children have small stomachs that fill up quickly, so offer small amounts of food and let your child ask for more. For example, offer only two strawberries instead of six. If your child wants more, they will ask. Your child will know how much is enough.

**2. Be mindful of how much your child is drinking.** Drinking too much means they may have little room for food. Young children only need two cups (16 oz.) of milk each day. Offer ½ cup (4 oz.) servings of milk at mealtimes and at snack time. Don't serve your child drinks such as fruit drinks and pop, and limit 100% juice to ½ cup daily. Offer water between meals and snacks.

**3. Keep an eye on the timing of snacks.** Offer snacks two to three hours before meals so you don't sabotage your child's appetite. If dinner is at 6 p.m. then a snack should be served no later than 4 p.m.

**4. Eat together as a family when possible.** Prepare one meal for the whole family, making sure there is at least one food that your child will like. Children learn from those around them so if family members enjoy peas and carrots, your child may decide that they are worth trying.

**5. Trust your child's appetite.** Pressuring children to eat particular foods through praise, rewards, bribery or punishment, including the "one bite rule", will only cause your child to eat less and be less likely to try new foods. Parents need to trust their child to decide how much to eat and allow them to refuse to eat certain foods. If your child doesn't want to eat a food, offer the food again without pressure another day. Children may need to try a new food 10 times or more before they will accept it.

Take the "[Trust me. Trust my tummy](#)" quiz to learn more about common feeding challenges and solutions that will help parents, caregivers and children enjoy mealtime. You can also enter for a chance to win a family-friendly cookbook!

### For more information:

[Changing yuck to yum! 10 tips to help your child become a good eater](#)  
[York Region Nutrition Services – Feeding you and your family](#)

**If you have questions about nutrition and healthy eating,** contact *EatRight Ontario* at 1-877-510-5102 to speak to a Registered Dietitian.

**Healthy Measures: Eat well, Be active and Be Yourself!**