



Have fun at get fit together

Children can be influenced to change the way they act when you involve them in the planning, make it fun, and do it with them. Everyone likes to have a voice and a choice. Family meetings are an excellent place to have both, and to establish healthy family habits. If you don't already have regular family meetings, start now. See the tip sheet on family meetings. Put on the agenda, "New Healthy Habits – Mom/Dad." Allow everyone to have a voice while brainstorming on how to make different choices to eat less and move more.

Make a list, check it twice

At the family meeting, make a list of all of the family's most delectable treats that have the least nutritional value. Announce, "We are going to start buying these left often. When do think we should have these as a special treat?" Then negotiate how often and how much to buy them.

It's up to parents to set limits and follow through. The only way to learn self-control is through practice and guidance. Youngsters are more likely to follow limits when they have negotiated them. Ask the children what physical activities they would like to do as a family and then do them at least once a week.

Set up a game to clear out your cupboards. Divide up into two teams. Start a scavenger hunt to find prepared foods with preservatives, and foods with the first ingredient as sugar or high fructose corn syrup.

Whoever finds the most wins. Start purchasing and preparing whole foods that come from the earth.

Focus on Fiber: vegetables, fruits & whole grains

The human stomach can only hold so much plant material. You will feel full faster. Vegetables, fruits and whole grains provide better nutrition. Labels provide the fiber content. Choose foods with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

The Goal of Moderation

The Buddha discovered the power of moderation or the middle way one day when he was fasting, which was popular among ascetics of the time. He couldn't think straight because he was so hungry, and succumbed to eating a bowl of rice. The Buddha felt so energized by the food that he realized the power of moderation. He gave up abstinence from food and resisted the lure of addiction. Choose from abstinence, addiction or moderation – the most difficult and practical path. Practice having small servings of foods that are high in calories and fat and low in fiber and nutrition.

Bike and walk together

One easy way to move more and eat less is to be self-propelled whenever possible.

Go bicycling as a family for fitness, fun and transportation.

Scope out safe routes to regular haunts in the neighborhood that are within walking or biking distance. Encourage your children to bike to the library, lessons and practices.

Organize a walking school bus so children can walk together to school. Go to: www.saferoutesinfo.org