Ask the Expert:
Serving as a Healthy Food Role Model for Children
Written by Clara Vásquez-Mejía, Food Scientist, B.Sc, M.Sc

Eating behaviors keep changing during the first years of life. This important time for growth is also important for starting healthy dietary habits. Parents, especially mothers, become role models for eating habits that are carried throughout life. Mother’s roles in children’s diets start in pregnancy and during breastfeeding. Infants are exposed to certain flavors of the mother’s diet through the amniotic fluid and breast milk. This bonding is called the ‘flavor bridge,’ and can promote the baby’s acceptance of different foods. Both parent and caregiver eating patterns have a strong impact on the foods children like and dislike, the amounts eaten at different meals, and mealt ime habits children will carry throughout life.

The USDA MyPlate has developed ten useful and easy-to-follow tips for parents

1. **Show by example**
   Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Show your kids that these food are enjoyable and tell them these foods are nutritious.

2. **Go food shopping together**
   Grocery shopping is a good time to introduce your children to nutrition.

3. **Offer the same food for everyone**
   Cooking the same foods for everyone in the family helps save time during planning and preparation.

4. **Reward with attention instead of food**
   Choose not to offer sweets as rewards, since kids may think sweets are better than other foods.

5. **Focus on each other at the table.**
6. **Listen to your children**
   Offer a small meal or healthy snack when your kids are hungry even when it is not yet mealtime.

7. **Limit screen time**
8. **Encourage physical activity**
9. **Be a good food role model.**
   Try, offer, and serve new foods alongside favorite foods.

To look up a complete version in English or in Spanish, visit the MyPlate website at [https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-a-healthy-role-model](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-a-healthy-role-model).

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Sources: [https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-a-healthy-role-model](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-a-healthy-role-model); [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2531152/]; Photo: [https://www.healthyeating.org/Healthy-Kids/Eat-Play-Love/Article-Viewer/Article/271/healthy-eating-starts-with-parent-role-models](https://www.healthyeating.org/Healthy-Kids/Eat-Play-Love/Article-Viewer/Article/271/healthy-eating-starts-with-parent-role-models)

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Food Safety:
Food Safety for Children Under Five

Written by Quynh Nguyen, Professional Student in College of Pharmacy, Purdue University

According to the CDC, children younger than the age of five have the highest incidence of food-borne illnesses. Very young children have a developing ability to fight diseases and illness. Children lose body fluid more easily than adults do, heightening the danger presented by food borne illness. This means that food safety is very important to young children's health. Parents can prevent food-borne illnesses in children by safely handling and storing foods.

The length of time that baby foods can be safely stored depends on the type of food. For example, strained meats and eggs, combinations of meat and vegetables, and homemade baby foods can be stored in the fridge for 1-2 days. These foods can stay safe for 1-2 months if they are frozen. However, strained fruits and vegetables can be safely stored for 2-3 days in the fridge and for 6-8 months in the freezer.

Try not to microwave solid baby foods in their original jars but transfer them to a dish so that the food is heated evenly. Meats, meat sticks, and eggs should not be heated in an oven because they overheat and splatter. Formula or breast milk should not be heated in the microwave. The best way to heat a bottle is to put it in hot water and wait until it is warm. Parents and caregivers may then test before feeding the baby to make sure the temperature is not too hot for the baby.

Finally, it is important to follow the four steps while preparing food for children under the age of five: clean hands and cooking surfaces, separate raw and cooked foods, cook to the right temperature, and chill within 2 hours.

## Cut Back on Your Kid’s Sweet Treats

Written by Alejandra Mencia, Food Scientist, M. Sc.

Added sugar in the diet is a source of extra calories that could result in unwanted weight gain during childhood. Limiting the amount of added sugar in children’s diets will help set them on a good path for a healthy eating.

### What can you do to limit added sugars?
- Reduce the size of sweet treats such as candies, sodas, fruit drinks, and ice cream by serving them in smaller plates, bowls or cups.
- Avoid sugary drinks and encourage drinking water when children are thirsty.
- Reward your child’s good behavior with forms of affection and limit sweet treats to special occasions.
- Make fruits an attractive and fun part of the meal by playing with their shapes and colors.
- Create snacks with your kids using dry whole-grains, dried fruits, and unsalted nuts or seeds.
- Teach your kids how to read the Nutrition Facts Labels and how to find total sugar on different products.

### Peanut Butter Banana Ice Cream

**Ingredients (2 servings)**
- 2 medium bananas, peeled, halved and frozen
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- Unsweetened shredded coconut for garnish (optional)

**Directions:**
1. Place bananas and peanut butter in a food processor.
2. Pulse and process until mostly smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides as needed.

### Saucy Pita Dippers

**Ingredients (1 serving)**
- 1 whole-wheat pita bread
- 1/4 cup spaghetti sauce
- 1 tablespoon shredded reduced-fat mozzarella cheese

**Directions:**
1. Preheat broiler.
2. Cut pita into 4 wedges.
3. Warm pita under the broiler (or in a toaster oven).
4. Place spaghetti sauce in a microwave-safe small bowl; microwave on High until warm, about 30 seconds.
5. Top the sauce with cheese. Serve alongside warm pita wedges.

**Tip:** you can substitute pita and mozzarella cheese with any type of bread and cheese.

### Sources and Photos
- [Cut Back on Sweet Treats](https://choosemyplateprod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tentips/DGTipsheet13CutBackOn-SweetTreats.pdf)
- [Peanut Butter Banana Ice Cream](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/258090/2-ingredient-peanut-butter-banana-ice-cream/)
- [Saucy Pita Dippers](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/259417/saucy-pita-dippers/)

*Underlining denotes TEFAP commodity ingredients*

**Peanut Butter and Banana Ice Cream**

Per serving: 315 Calories, 8g Total Protein, 33g Total Carbohydrate, 5g Total Dietary Fiber, 1.6g Total Sugars, 16g Total Fat, 3g Total Saturated Fat, 106mg Sodium

**Saucy Pita Dippers**

Per serving: 127 Calories, 6g Total Protein, 21g Total Carbohydrate, 3g Total Dietary Fiber, 4g Total Sugars, 2g Total Fat, 0g Total Saturated Fat, 449mg Sodium

*Photos: [Peanut Butter Banana Ice Cream](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/258090/2-ingredient-peanut-butter-banana-ice-cream/); [Saucy Pita Dippers](http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/259417/saucy-pita-dippers/)*
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This newsletter is edited by Quynh Nguyen, Yibin Liu, PhD and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Purdue Nutrition Science Department Cooking Classes
Written by Quynh Nguyen, Professional Student in College of Pharmacy, Purdue University

The Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue is partnering with local producers to host “Eat Local” cooking classes every month. During each lesson, participants are provided with cooking instructions, a hands-on cooking experience, tasting, and a take-home recipe booklet. The two classes offered in October feature recipes using cabbage and apples.

October 6: Cabb-Asian featuring cashew cabbage, Mongolian noodle and veggie stir-fry, egg roll in a bowl, and Thai slaw with peanut dressing.

October 20: Apples featuring cinnamon apple pork chops; cranberry apple pecan rice pilaf; apple, cheese and honey crostini; and homemade applesauce

All levels are welcome. Classes take place 5:30-7 p.m. in Lyles-Porter Hall Demo Kitchen, Room 1107. Free parking is available after 5 p.m. in the Harrison Street Parking Garage nearby Lyles-Porter Hall.

Classes are $20 each and open to the public. Registration is required at www.conf.purdue.edu/eatlocal. For more information, contact Jessica Isaacs (jessica.c.isaacs@gmail.com) or Jessica Shellhorn (jshellho@purdue.edu).

Source: https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/purdutoday/releases/2016/Q3/nutrition-science-to-offer-