Handy Tips for Parents

Every day is a new chance to improve your family’s health habits. Here are some tips to help you live healthfully, day by day.

**Be positive!** Be sure to remain encouraging and supportive while trying to improve your family’s habits. Tell them that they can succeed and ask how you can help them. Be sure to tell them you are proud of them for trying.

- Keep cut-up fruits and veggies in plastic bags in the fridge for handy, healthy snacks
- Encourage kids to take several bites of a new fruit, veggie or whole grain before they decide if they like it. Young tongues need 7 to 10 tries before they decide they like a flavor.
- Encourage your children to be a healthy role model for you. Let them choose healthier options for foods or which activity to do as a family.
- Divide and conquer. Make sure you eat the right balance of healthy foods. Fill 1/2 a typical dinner plate with fruits and veggies; cover 1/4 with protein (meat, fish, beans, tofu), and the last 1/4 with whole grains (brown rice, whole wheat bread)
- Select TV shows or computer games ahead of time so children have a plan for how they will use their screen time.
- Treasure hunts are a fun way to be active outside. Hunt for rocks that look like gold. Find special-shaped leaves. Try to find the birds whose calls you hear.
- Have your children ask an elder what they did for fun when they were your child’s age and to teach your children a game.
- Move the TV to a room in which your child doesn’t sleep to reduce viewing time and improve sleep.
• **Boredom Busters**: Have your child draw pictures of the things they like to do on squares of paper. Put them into a can your child decorates. Then when they say they’re bored, they will have options other than watching TV or playing computer games.

• Take a **10-minute movement break after 30 minutes of screen time**. In 2 hours, you can reach 40 minutes of activity.

• **Balloon Game**: Play as a family or your child can play alone. Blow up a few balloons and tie off the ends. Toss all the balloons up in the air and try to keep them all off the ground.

• **Where can you go today?** Plan a safe walking route to school, a park or another fun place in your neighborhood with your child – then walk!

• As you walk, **talk about the things you can see that you wouldn’t normally see** if you were driving by them in a car.

• **Hopscotch**: Have kids draw any pattern of connected squares on the sidewalk with chalk to make hopscotch. They can hop from square to square on one foot, jumping over squares that have their or other players’ markers in them.

• **Make water the first choice as a drink**. Or mix a favorite juice half and half with water.

• Fill a **pitcher of water** and keep it in the fridge. Cold water can taste better.

• **Freeze!** Add a little lemon juice to water in the ice cube tray. When it freezes, you have a cool treat that is a fun way to get a little more water.

• Give your child a **jug or bottle of water to carry with them** so it’s always handy when they’re thirsty.

• **Make sun tea**: Fill a glass container with water (choose a container that holds as many cups as cups of tea you want to make). Put several tea bags in a glass container. Set the container in the sun. Just wait! In a few hours you will have tea.

• Let your children **use a straw** when they drink water. It’s just more fun!

www.healthykidsnm.org

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Check out this fabulous resource for a year’s worth of daily activity tips that are fun and easy!

[http://www.aahperd.org/headstartbodystart/activityresources/activityCalendar](http://www.aahperd.org/headstartbodystart/activityresources/activityCalendar)
(From the American Alliance for Health, Physical Activity and Dance)