

# ready, steady, go!



Get your  
kids bursting  
with energy!

Packed with  
tips and ideas!



Created in partnership with



department for  
children, schools and families

change  
4 life

Eat well Move more Live longer



# welcome...

# ...to change4life

These days, 'modern life' can mean we're just not as physically active as our parents and grandparents were. With so many opportunities to watch TV or films, and with so much convenience and fast food available, we don't move about as much, or eat as well, as we used to.

This means that 9 out of 10 of our kids risk growing up with dangerous amounts of fat in their bodies, which can cause life-threatening diseases like cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease – so it's really important that we do something about it now.

You've taken the first step towards getting your kids eating well, moving more and living longer by reading this handbook. It's been specially designed for parents and carers to help toddlers to pre-school kids (meaning kids aged roughly between 1 and 4 years old) to eat well, move more and live longer.

Coming soon! If you are pregnant or have a baby you can ask for Start4Life information which has advice on breastfeeding, weaning and active play. See the back page of this guide for details on how you can find out more.

## What is Change4Life?

Change4Life is here to give you the support and info you need to help your kids lead healthy, happy and longer lives. There will be events and activities coming up across the country for you and the kids to get involved with, as well as loads of hints, tips, recipes and ideas for activity and play. Everyone's getting stuck in!



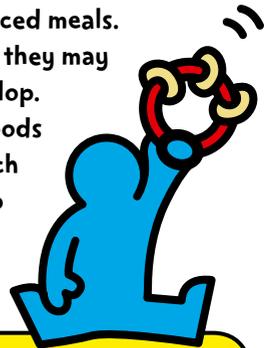
## Get set?

Change4Life is all about making small changes to our lifestyles that will make a really big difference. With toddlers and pre-school children, now is the time to help get them into good habits right from the start. It's easy to do this now than to try and change them later. However, unhealthy habits are all too easy to pick up at any age so starting with a small step is often the easiest way to begin, rather than trying to do everything at once. So how about having a read through this booklet and choosing two or three tips to try each week. You'll be amazed how quickly they become part of your everyday routine.

## Ready, steady, go!

It's really important that young kids get a healthy start in life. Moving about, eating well and teaching them good habits now will help prevent them developing serious illnesses when they're adults. Of course, the great thing about learning good habits at this stage is they don't have to unlearn bad habits as they're growing up.

But life is busy and we often don't make time for regular, balanced meals. Skipping healthy meals and snacks isn't good for young kids as they may miss out on the essential nutrients they need to grow and develop. So making time for regular meals and trying lots of different foods is important – and a bit of planning doesn't have to take as much time as you think. In fact, once you've got used to it, it can help **SAVE** you time.



## How are the kids? survey

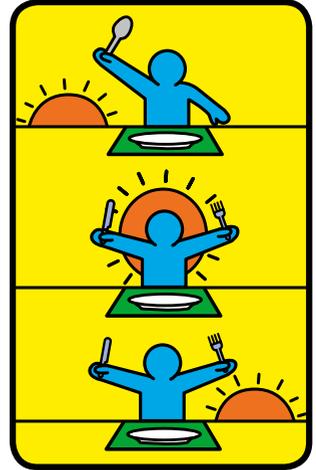
If you have children aged 2-11, a useful tool for deciding where to start in your family is the How are the kids? questionnaire. It helps you find out what you're doing right, and what areas you may need to focus on. When you submit your answers, you'll soon receive a **FREE** Action Plan specially prepared for your family. The Action Plan will be tailored to your kids, so it will have just the right simple and easy hints and tips for your family.

Visit [www.howarethekids.com](http://www.howarethekids.com) to fill in your survey now!

# meal time

Regular meals are important for kids from the moment they're eating solid foods. Here's how to get them eating better.

- 3 balanced, healthy meals a day plus a nutritious snack at mid-morning and mid-afternoon should give kids under 5 everything they need to keep going the whole day
- Like us, kids use smell, sight, touch and even sound as well as taste when they're eating. Letting young kids play with their food – even if they make a mess – helps them to be better and healthier eaters when they're older
- Kids learn from others so sitting down to eat together will help them to try different foods
- Even toddlers can get involved in preparing the meal – it may take a little longer, but they're far more likely to eat it



## How Diane does it

Diane tells us how she got her son eating healthily right from the start.

“When Jack was about 1 and started eating family foods I was really worried about him getting all the vitamins he needed to grow and develop.

So I tried to give him at least one bit of veg or fruit in all his meals, like putting sweetcorn in a tuna sandwich and giving him fruit with his porridge for breakfast. And when he got hungry in between meals, he had things like rice cakes or some banana – but I did sometimes let him have a biscuit!

Now that he's 3, he still loves healthy food, and I feel like I've done the best I could to help him grow up strong and healthy. It's actually made me look at what I eat too!”



## Fussy eaters

Most kids under 5 years of age go through a stage of refusing food, and it's most common between 1 and 2 years old. Here are some things you can try when your kids are being fussy eaters:

- It can be easy to give them more attention when they're not eating, but this will encourage them to refuse food. So praise them when they do eat and give them less attention when they don't
- It can take a few attempts before they'll start eating certain foods, so keep offering foods that they don't seem to like – but don't force it down them
- Even 1 year olds will copy what you do, so if they see you eating lots of different healthy foods, they'll probably do the same. And developing good eating habits now should last them a lifetime
- Remember that toddlers will eat less if they are tired, distracted or feeling unwell

- Too much water, milk or juice before a meal can also reduce their appetites. It's best to save milk for snack times or before they go to sleep
- Try different foods at meal times if you can. The more they see a variety of foods, the more likely they'll try them – and hopefully like them too

Most fussy eating goes away with time, so be patient and keep at it. But if you are worried, have a chat with your health visitor or doctor. Your local Children's Centre can also give you advice and support.



**Top Tip** – If your kids are looked after while you're at work, for example, find out what they've eaten that day – and which foods they've refused – so you can try different foods at home. Your child carer may also be able to offer you advice on ways to encourage better eating habits.

# me size meals

It may seem obvious, but if you're feeding a 1 year old, a 4 year old and yourself, the 1 year old needs less than the 4 year old, and the 4 year old needs less than you. A good way to think about how much smaller kids' stomachs are than yours is to look at the size of their fists compared to yours. When you're serving up, they need much less than we do to fill them up.

Asking kids to clear their plates when they're full up can make them dislike those foods and stop enjoying mealtimes. It can also mean they're taking in more energy than they'll burn off.

We need to watch packaging sizes too - many pre-packed products are made for adults, so you'll need to store what's left over for another time.

Try the easy recipe on the next page for a healthy, me size meal they'll love!



Most kids know when they've had enough to eat.



## Healthy mini-pizza faces

These little pizzas are great for getting all sorts of veg into your kids - there are loads of different combinations you can try, and you can make faces on the top with pieces of vegetables if you wish. Your children will be only too happy to help make them as well as eat them!

Serves: 2 children

Suitable for vegetarians

### You'll need:

- Quarter of a French stick (about 5 inches or 12 cm long)
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 large tomato
- 2 tablespoons sweetcorn kernels
- 2 tablespoons grated cheddar or mozzarella cheese

Quick and easy recipe!

# snack check

Young kids do need healthy snacks between meals to keep them going throughout the day and keep them topped up with energy. Along with their main meals, they need to have a healthy mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack which is packed with nutrients as they need lots of these to grow and develop properly. That's why it's really important they're not snacks full of added sugar, fat and all the things we shouldn't eat too much of.

By not giving young kids unhealthy snacks in the first place, they shouldn't pester you as much for them as they get older.

| Snack check |   |
|-------------|---|
| Apple       | 1 |
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1. Cut the French stick in half lengthways to make two slices
2. Spread the soft side with the tomato puree and sprinkle with the herbs
3. Finely chop the fresh tomato and sprinkle on top of the puree with the sweetcorn
4. Sprinkle the cheese over the top.
5. If you want to, you can add slices of red pepper as hair, slices of courgette as eyes and slices of mushroom as a mouth to make a face on the top
6. Grill under a hot grill for 2-3 minutes until the cheese bubbles
7. Let them cool for a couple of minutes (so the children don't burn themselves) and serve to two smiley children

See our food safety tips on page 11

## Healthy, easy snacks!

Here are some great healthy snacks ideas:

**Chopped up veg such as carrot, cucumber or tomato with plain yoghurt**

**Home-made plain popcorn (unsweetened/unsalted)**

**Bite sized chunks of fruit with plain yoghurt**

**Rice cakes, oat cakes, breadsticks**

**Toast, bread or a child sized sandwich**

Drinking lots of fluids, especially water, is also important to keep them healthy and full of energy. However, too much milk or juice before a meal can spoil their appetites

**Remember that dried fruit is great with meals and in recipes but is naturally very high in sugar so is best avoided as a snack**

Kids shouldn't have nuts because of the risk of choking and should never be left alone when they're eating

# sugar swap

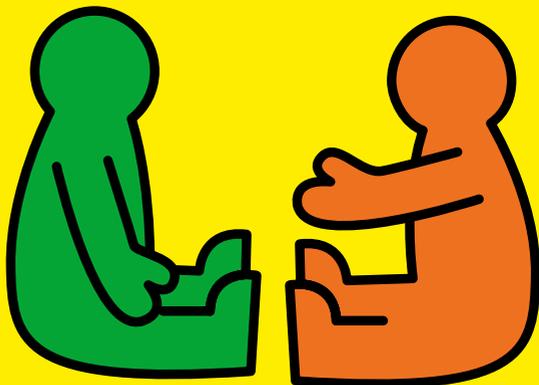
We wouldn't let our kids eat sugar straight from the sugar bowl. But we tend not to think about the added sugars hiding in the other things they eat and drink.



Top tips

## What to swap

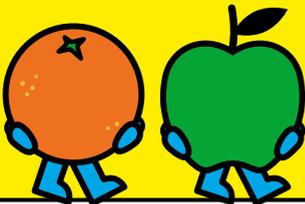
- **Drinks.** More than a quarter of the artificial sugars in kids's diets comes from sugary drinks. So giving them water, milk (**ideally semi-skimmed, but remember kids under 2 need full-fat milk**) or watered-down 100% fruit juice will really give them a healthy start. We do not recommend drinks with added sugars
- **Snacks.** Choose snacks without added sugars such as fruit, breadsticks, rice cakes or toast, instead of sweets, biscuits, chocolate and cakes
- **Sugar.** Look for the no-added sugar or sugar-free options on packaging labels
- **Breakfast.** Give them lower sugar cereals with fruit or other breakfast options like porridge, eggs and toast, bite-size pieces of fruit and yoghurt or toasted fruit bread
- **Puddings.** Fresh, canned or frozen fruit or yoghurt is so much better for them than chocolate, biscuits and cake



## Giving meals a healthy twist

We've all got meals that we love, but sometimes they're not the healthiest options. Here are some clever ways you can make them better for you, and they'll still taste great!

- Make sure every meal has vegetables added in somewhere
- Choose fish or lean cuts of meat and fish, and take the skin off turkey and chicken
- Serve rice, beans, pasta or couscous with meat – it makes a really nice change from chips
- Instead of chips you could have boiled, mashed or baked potatoes or try potato wedges
- Try having your vegetables without butter or sauce on them
- Use herbs and spices, lemon-juice or salt-free seasoning mixes instead of salt – they all add lots of flavour to meals
- Use light mayonnaise instead of the regular variety
- Don't add salt or sugar to young kids's food in cooking or at the table





## Tuna pasta bake

Serves: 2 adults and 2 kids  
(5-11 years) or 4 kids under 5

**For this tasty meal you will need:**

300g of pasta shapes

1 small onion peeled and chopped

1 crushed (or finely chopped) garlic clove

1 tablespoon of vegetable oil

2 tins of tuna (in spring water)

1 large tin of chopped tomatoes

A big pinch of dried mixed herbs

75g of grated low fat cheddar cheese

Top tip – you can add extra vegetables like sweetcorn or mushrooms to make the dish even tastier and help towards their 5 A DAY.



1. Turn on the oven to preheat at 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4
2. Put the pasta into a large saucepan full of boiling water and cook for the time it says on the pack
3. While the pasta is cooking, put the vegetable oil in a large pan and fry the onion and garlic until softened
4. Open the tins of tuna and pour away the spring water. Then add the tuna to the pan and stir it round for a minute to heat it through
5. Add the chopped tomatoes and the mixed herbs, and cook for another 5 minutes
6. Drain the pasta once it's cooked and stir it into the sauce in the other pan
7. Put it all into a large oven dish and cover it with the grated cheese
8. If the ingredients are still hot when they are placed in the oven dish, then grill for 5 minutes until the cheese bubbles. If the ingredients have cooled, bake in the oven for 20 minutes covered, and then remove the cover and grill the top for 5 minutes until the cheese bubbles

# Chicken kebabs

This is a delicious meal that's easy to make and the whole family can enjoy.

Serves: 2 adults and 2 kids (kids under 5 only need half a skewer)

**To make 4 skewers you will need:**

2 skinless chicken breasts cut into cubes

1 tablespoon of olive oil

1 crushed (or finely chopped) garlic clove

1 tablespoon of lemon juice

Some black pepper

1 large red pepper, de-seeded and cut into 8 -12 cubes

1 large yellow pepper, de-seeded and cut into 8 -12 cubes

4 mushrooms cut in half

4 kebab skewers

Serve the kebabs with rice or potatoes and salad or another vegetable such as sweetcorn.

Take the food from the skewer before giving to kids under 5.

You can easily swap the chicken for other meats like pork and lamb, or fish such as tuna. Vegetarians can use cubed vegetable protein or tofu instead.

Tuna fish and vegetarian options may require a slightly shorter cooking time.



1. Put the cubed chicken into a bowl with the olive oil, crushed garlic, lemon juice and black pepper
2. Use your hands to mix it all together so the chicken is completely coated
3. Leave it for 10 minutes, or if you have time, you can do this step earlier in the day, cover it with cling film and leave it in the fridge
4. When you're ready to make the kebabs, thread a cube of chicken onto a skewer, then some pepper, then some mushroom and so on. It's up to you what order you do them in
5. Put the grill on to a medium heat and cook them for about 12-15 minutes. Make sure you turn them regularly while they're cooking so they cook on each side but don't burn. Check carefully to make sure the chicken is cooked thoroughly before serving

**Food safety tip** – always wash your hands, work surfaces, utensils and chopping boards before you start preparing food. Find more tips at [www.eatwell.gov.uk/keepingfoodsafe](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/keepingfoodsafe)

**Allergies** – always read the food label and keep an eye on your kids if they are trying something for the first time. You can find out more about allergies and food intolerances at [www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthissues/foodintolerance](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthissues/foodintolerance)

# 5 a day

It's easier than you think to get the kids eating at least five portions of fruit and veg every day – fresh, frozen, juiced, dried and canned all count!

Remember – a portion of fruit or veg roughly fits into their hand.

## Easy ways to get 5 A DAY into them

- Use canned and frozen fruit and veg – they keep longer and can be cheaper. Kids love tinned fruit – choose the ones in natural juice not sugary syrup though
- Chop up some veg and put it in the tomato sauce in pasta or on top of a pizza
- Chop fruit up for kids and make shapes with it – they're more likely to eat fun food
- Get creative – grated carrots or peppers are really easy to add to sauces like bolognaise
- Chop up cucumbers, peppers and carrots into sticks and make faces and shapes out of them
- Give them a glass of watered-down 100% fruit juice



## Banana smoothie

Healthy drink!

This delicious fruity drink can be made with lots of different fresh or frozen fruits, like strawberries, peach or berries. Why not try them all?

Serves: 2 kids (5-11 years) or 3 kids under 5.

Suitable for vegetarians

### You will need:

1 banana

100ml of cold semi-skimmed milk  
(use whole milk if they're under 2 years old)

1 heaped tablespoon of plain yoghurt

1. Peel the bananas and cut them into thick slices
2. Put the banana into a blender or a bowl
3. Add the milk and yoghurt to the blender or bowl
4. Put the lid on the blender and blend for 10-15 seconds, until the mixture is smooth but not too runny. Alternatively use a hand held blender carefully to mix the ingredients in a bowl
5. Pour into glasses and give to your thirsty children!

This tastes better cold – so chill before serving or add a little crushed ice

# up and about

It's really important for kids to take part in active play - pre-school kids need lots of time and space to burn off energy, learn skills, use their imagination and develop healthy, strong bodies. Providing lots of chances for kids to explore and play inside and out for short spells everyday is really important.

Given half a chance, it comes naturally - but sometimes they need a bit of help from adults. It doesn't have to be organised exercise - a run around in the park or a walk to the shops instead of taking the bus or car all help.

Often you just need to give them a little help at the beginning and a ball or toy to get their imaginations and bodies moving!

Rest is important, too. But, as a rule, kids under 5 shouldn't sit still for long periods of time (e.g an hour or more). Sometimes it's unavoidable but where you can, when they are awake, try to cut down how long they're sitting in the buggy, car seat or in front of the TV to as little as possible.

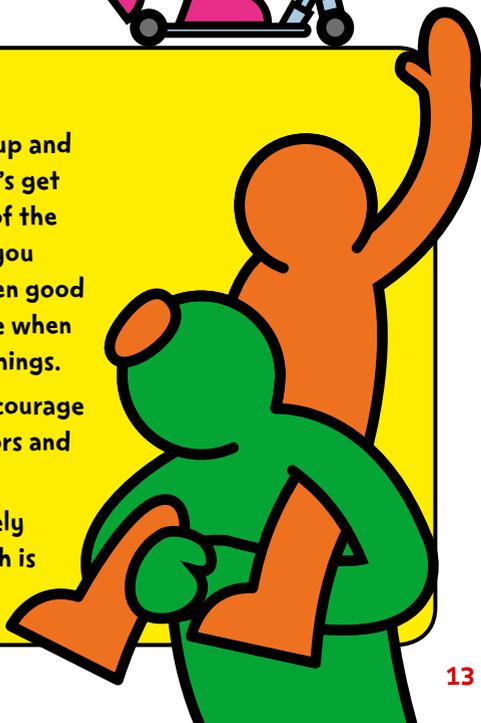


## Let's get going

Active kids are happy kids - they like to be up and about, moving around and having fun. So let's get them off the couch, away from the TV, out of the car and running around! The great thing is, you don't need expensive games and toys, or even good weather. It's amazing what fun kids can have when playing indoors, with everyday household things.

The next few pages are all about how to encourage your kids to enjoy simple games, both indoors and outdoors, and burn off their energy.

Remember, the more kids play, the more likely they are to have a good night's sleep - which is good news for everyone!



## Easy ways to get active play into their day

Kids love playing outdoors, whatever the weather – try not to worry about them getting a bit dirty. It often just adds to the fun. You don't have to have a garden or lots of outside space either. If you live in a city look for play areas, parks, city farms or even safe areas of rough ground that are only a short walk away. If you live out of town, head for the local fields, woodlands and beaches or country parks where kids can run around and let off steam for free.

## Everyone can play

All kids should be encouraged to play and enjoy themselves as much as possible. Some of the games included here may not be practical for all families- for kids and/or parents with disabilities, for instance. But most can be adapted to your family's needs.

For more ideas on play geared towards disabled kids and/or parents, you can download these pdfs from the Contact a Family website:

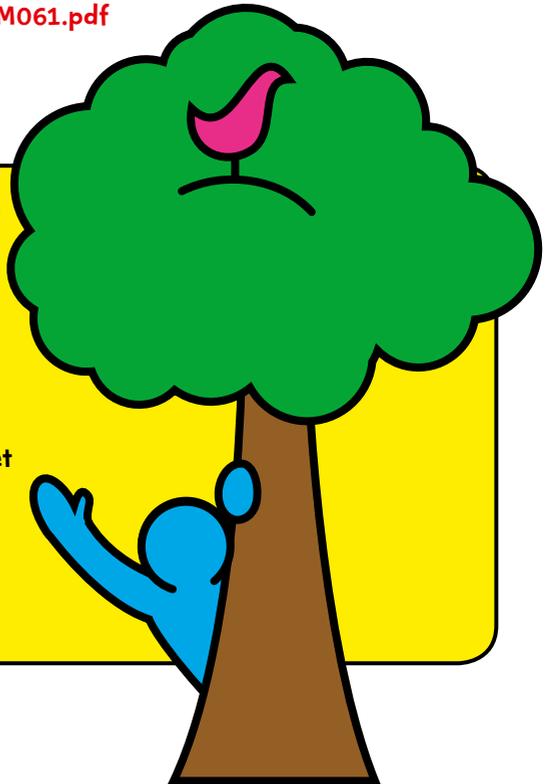
[www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/holidays.pdf](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/holidays.pdf)

[www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/westmids/WM061.pdf](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/westmids/WM061.pdf)

### Ideas for outdoor play

Come rain or shine, why not try a few of these simple ideas?

- Get out and about and let your kids run, walk and use their imaginations to play
- Stop off at the park to play or to meet other families
- Play football or let them chase after a ball
- Get them to help push the buggy



## Ideas for indoor play

The home is a great place for games. Most of the time all you need is your imagination and a few everyday items to make play time more exciting. Sometimes it pays to allow a little mess to keep the kids occupied in a good game - especially if that game involves tidying up afterwards!

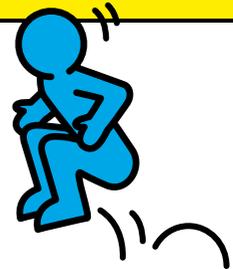
Here are a few suggestions that are low-cost, fun, safe and don't need much room.

- At home, cut up old cardboard boxes and turn them into cars
- Play hide-and-seek or party games like musical bumps or statues
- Help your kids crawl, walk, jump, balance and hop about as much as possible
- Put on some music and dance and sing
- Do action games with your kids (e.g Head, shoulders, knees and toes)
- Ask kids to lie on the floor and see how far they can wiggle

For more ideas to help your kids play visit [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

## Play safe

We all worry about the safety of our kids, but we shouldn't wrap them in cotton wool or stop them from playing in the fresh air. Toddlers need supervising more than older kids, so here are a few things you can do to help avoid risks:



If they are playing outdoors:

- Kids are always going to fall over, but you can have a good look around and help them avoid any mishaps
- Look for places with few or, if possible, no cars passing nearby
- Don't leave kids unsupervised, but remember that it's good for them to take small risks - it's how they develop new skills and conquer their fears

And if they're playing indoors:

- A room, or an area in it, can be made safe by removing all sharp and breakable objects
- Cover or move furniture with sharp corners or edges, and make sure any areas of plate-glass are cordoned off
- Chairs can make a good safety barrier

# change 4 life

**Eat well   Move more   Live longer**

**If you're a parent,  
and you'd like more information, or have  
any questions, then please call **0300 123 4567\***  
or search online for 'Change4Life'.**

**If you're a Local Supporter,  
we'd like to remind you to ask as many people as  
possible in your organisation or group to register  
with Change4Life. The more people who register,  
the easier it is for us to keep everyone up to date  
with the latest news and support materials.**

**So ask them to sign up now by visiting  
[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) or by calling **0300 123 3434\*****

\*Calls to 03 numbers should cost no more than geographic 01 or 02 calls, and may be part of inclusive minutes subject to your provider and your call package. We're open from 9am to 8pm, 7 days a week.