

# *Tools for Schools*

March is National Nutrition Month, a great time to encourage both kids and parents to eat healthy foods. Here are five tips to help you meet that goal of eating healthy at home that are provided by the American Dietetic Association.

1. ***Make family mealtimes a priority:*** Plan healthy meals in advance to ensure that you are offering a wide range of healthy items. “Research shows that children who eat with their families tend to have a healthier diet” says an ADA representative. “With busy schedules it can be hard to sit down for a family meal, but even one or two nights a week can have a positive effect”. Breakfast or lunch can be eaten together if a family dinner is not an option.
2. ***Be flexible about food:*** Being overly restrictive about food can lead to an unhealthy preoccupation with food. “Never offer food as a reward or as a punishment,” says Johnson. “You can’t expect perfection but you can make sure that the majority of choices are healthy”. Also, if it seems that a picky eater isn’t open to new choices, be persistent. Most kids need several exposures to a new food before becoming comfortable with a new item.
3. ***Encourage input:*** It is important to seek your child’s involvement in the family’s menu. Bring kids into the kitchen by allowing them to help with the menu and do age-appropriate tasks like setting the table or tearing lettuce for the salad.
4. ***Get active:*** A proper diet is just one ingredient for a healthy lifestyle. With technology the way it is today kids are spending too much time in front of the computer or other gadgets. Planning regular physical activities as a family is a great way to encourage your kids to get and stay active.
5. ***Be a good role model:*** Children learn from their parents or guardians. Parents can be a great influence on their children simply by having a healthy relationship with food and engaging in physical activity.

For more information visit the ADA at : [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)