

# Creating healthy meal times

Creating a healthy meal environment at home can set the tone for good eating habits. It's a chance to bring some fun, calm and connection to family meal time.

## Family mealtimes:

- Eat dinner together at the table when you can.
- Keep screens away so everyone can chat.
- Use mealtime to talk. Share the 'best part of the day'.
- Get the children to help set the table and clean up.

## Set up the home:

- Keep a fruit bowl on the bench so it's the first thing everyone sees.
- Make healthy foods easy to reach.
- Keep cold water in the fridge.
- Store cut-up vegies in clear containers where children can see them,

## Tiny chefs, tasty wins:

Children try more foods when they help make them.

- Let them help choose dinner, wash vegies and stir the pot.
- Get children to help serve dinner. They can choose how much goes on their plate.

## Kids copy what they see, so try be a good role model:

- Talk about food in a positive way.
- Avoid talking about weight, dieting or calling foods 'bad'.
- Eat vegetables and healthy meals so your children see you enjoying them.
- Drink water with your meals.

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## Supporting a picky eater:

Picky eating is part of growing up. With a little patience and creativity, mealtimes can be a place for children to explore new foods at their own pace.

- Offer new foods with familiar foods.
- No pressure. Let children try new foods at their own pace.
- Change things up so meals aren't the same every night.
- Stay calm if food is refused. It's normal.
- Praise children for trying new foods, but don't use food as a reward.
- Keep offering new foods, even if they say no many times.
- Make eating fun. Try a vegie face plate.
- Add extra vegies to meals, like grated carrot or zucchini in spaghetti bolognese or other dishes.

## Keep mealtimes positive:

- Praise children when they try new foods
- Offer fruit, vegetables and new foods often.
- Focus on talking and spending time together.
- Let children help in the kitchen with cooking and setting the table.

Fussy eating is normal, if you are looking for some extra information on how to support your fussy eater, there are resources available:

