

## NUTRITION & HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR CHILDREN 2-5 YEARS OLD

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT MY PRESCHOOLER TO DO AS HE GROWS?

- Pour liquids from a small pitcher
- Request a favorite food
- Enjoy foods in various shapes and colors
- Enjoy imitating the cook and helping to prepare food
- May be influenced by TV
- Able to use a knife and fork by 4 years
- More interested in talking than eating
- Continue to have food pickiness (when she only wants to eat a particular food)
- Influenced by his peers or siblings

### HOW CAN I TEACH MY PRESCHOOLER HEALTHY EATING BEHAVIORS?

- Make one “family” meal, but offer several “side” dishes that your child may chose from (bread, yogurt, fruit, cheese sticks, etc.). Serve an unfamiliar food with a familiar food. Don’t cater to your child’s finicky appetite by making him a “special” meal; this just makes him even more finicky!
- Offer fruits and vegetables at every meal – we want kids to love fruits and veggies as snacks just as much (or more) as they love their crackers.
- Continue to limit milk consumption to 12 to 16 oz. per day. The milk should be 1% or skim. Offer water for thirst. Discourage juice and pop. Vitamin D intake should be 600 IU per day.
- Involve your preschooler in meal planning and preparation. Children are more likely to try a food they have helped to prepare. Even young children can help stir, mash, pour and measure.
- Offer a new food multiple times... don’t give up. Many young children must be offered a food 8 to 10 times before they find they like it.
- Imitation is a powerful learning tool, so be a role model. If you want your child to drink milk or eat fruits and vegetables, make sure he sees you drinking milk and eating fruits and vegetables!

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

- Establish eating and mealtime responsibilities: It is your responsibility as a parent to determine when meals and snacks will be served, and what foods will be served. It is your child’s responsibility to decide what to eat and if to eat at all!

### HOW CAN I MAKE MEALTIMES MORE ENJOYABLE?

- Avoid mealtime power struggles. Do not force your child to clean his plate before leaving the table.
- Create a relaxed setting for meals. Cut down on distractions. Turn screens off.
- Let your child leave the table when he has finished eating.
- Praise your preschooler for trying new foods and for practicing appropriate behavior at the table.
- “A taste is just a taste” or the “One Bite Rule”: your child must at least taste a new food, but let her decide the amount to try, even if it’s a very, very small bite.

### *The Daily 5-2-1-0*

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|  <p><b>5</b> servings of fruits &amp; vegetables</p> |  <p><b>2</b> hour limit on screen time<br/>(TV, computer, &amp; video games)</p> |  <p><b>1</b> hour active play or exercise</p> |  <p><b>0</b> liquid calories<br/>(pop, sweetened juices, or sports drinks)</p> |
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For more advice, check out our website at [www.southlakepediatrics.com](http://www.southlakepediatrics.com) for links and information, or talk to your South Lake clinician.