

Protecting Children's Health

Teach Healthy Eating ①

(NAPS)—From fast food at every turn to cutbacks in phys. ed. programs at school, it's no wonder that many of America's children are unhealthy and overweight. Fortunately, there are steps parents can take to help youngsters lead long and healthy lives. Susan Burke, Chief Nutritionist at eDiets.com, offers these tips:

1. **Lead by example.** Make healthy eating a family affair. Buy, cook and enjoy nutritious food together.

2. **Empower the little people.** Include your kids in planning, shopping and preparing meals and snacks.

3. **Dish it up.** Plate entrées in the kitchen instead of serving family style. Portion size counts as much as food selection. Offer seconds on vegetables.

4. **Chuck the chips.** Buy healthy snacks instead, such as baby carrots with a fat-free ranch dressing, pretzels, grapes and baked tortilla chips with bean dip or salsa.

5. **Order "on the side."** When ordering at restaurants, teach kids to order salad dressing and other condiments and sauces "on the side." Don't butter that bread.

6. **Eliminate empty calories.** A 20-ounce soda has at least 10 teaspoons of added sugar and no nutritional value. Encourage water, instead.

7. **Get moving.** Get everyone off the couch and take a fun family walk after dinner.

8. **Be flexible.** There are no "forbidden foods." All foods can fit into a healthy diet...in moderation. Dedicate a day each week to cook a favorite dish that your kids and family love.