

## NO VACATION FROM HEALTHY EATING

Vacation is a wonderful opportunity for healthy eating. Not only are meal times more relaxed and less pressured, there is the undeniable, overwhelming abundance of fresh foods, dripping with summer goodness and



nutrition just waiting to be enjoyed.

With more time for eating, there can be less reliance on fast foods and more time to prepare and eat whole, natural foods. And, because kids like it simple, you can rely on the naturally rich flavors of fresh foods simply prepared.

Healthy eating habits are developed, not born. Making a practice of buying and serving mostly fresh, organic, and minimally processed foods will help your child grow a preference for those foods. Vacation time is an opportunity for you to reinforce those preferences. These practices can help:



1. Make frequent trips with your kids to the local farmer's market. Shopping for food becomes a fun outing when you go to an open-air market where fresh foods are the highlight. Let your kids participate in the choices
2. Build your meal around fresh vegetables and fruits. Instead of focusing summer meals on grilled meats, plan around the vegetables. For example, quarter and grill some sweet peppers, slice and grill zucchini basted with a favorite marinade or barbeque sauce, and serve with a small skewer of chicken or firm fish on the side.



3. Grow a garden. Children will find joy and delight in actually being encouraged to dig in the dirt. There are even bigger rewards in watching seeds sprout. Closeness to the foods you eat supports a preference for those foods. Kid friendly crops that are easy and fast to grow include cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, beans and carrots.



4. Make mealtime fun and relaxing. Have lots of picnics, even if just in the back yard. A picnic is a good place to begin serving fruit for dessert. Dine out on the picnic table, even for breakfast. New foods are better accepted in a relaxing atmosphere.



5. Grill healthier choices. Instead of fatty hot dogs and burgers, try salmon burgers or veggie burgers. Try grilled fruit for dessert as a healthier sweet. Fruit is basically made up of water and sugar and by grilling it you can concentrate the flavors by reducing the water and caramelizing the natural sugars. To keep them from sticking to the grill brush with a tiny bit of butter.
6. Be aware of the calories in summer foods, and make lower calorie and fat choices. Potato salad, laden with mayo, has loads of calories that most kids don't need. Instead, try a corn salad with red pepper bits

and a bit of oil and vinegar. Instead of an ice cream cone, make some



juice pops in your own freezer.

7. Don't mistake thirst for hunger. If your child complains of hunger other than at meal or snack time, consider offering water first.



Frequently thirst is mistaken for hunger.

8. Allow for some indiscretions, such as at the state fair, or once in a while when the ice-cream truck comes around. With an otherwise healthy diet, there's room for treats.