



Helping Your Child Grow Strong & Healthy

To grow healthy and strong, your child needs to have clothing and shelter, eat nutritiously, get the right amount of sleep, be physically active, and receive regular health and dental care. Parents can help their children grow strong & healthy:

YOUR INFANT (under age 2):

- Respond to your infant's needs quickly. If she is crying, she might be hungry, need her diaper changed, or just need some one-on-one time with you. If your baby cries for extended periods of time or is extremely fussy, talk with your pediatrician: It could be a symptom of a more serious health condition.
- Set up regular visits with your child's pediatrician – a doctor with special training in caring for children – to keep your child well. Be sure your child gets all the necessary shots (immunizations).
- Start to get your infant on a sleep schedule. Most children (ages 1-3) sleep about 10 to 13 hours a night plus naps during the day.

YOUR TODDLER (2-3 year olds):

- Take your child to the dentist by age 2 and schedule regular check-ups after age 2.
- Be a positive role model. While your child is still young, get in the habit of being physically active and eating healthy. Be sure to eat lots of fruits and vegetables, be willing to try new foods, and consume smaller portions. Eat meals together when your child is young, so it becomes a habit.
- Make "pretend play" healthy. Encourage your child to use his imagination to pretend to cook delicious and healthy foods. Have your child use a shopping bag and pretend she is at the grocery store: ask her to "purchase" different types of pretend/real foods (fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, grains) from the "grocer."

YOUR PRESCHOOLER (4 year olds):

- Limit TV viewing. Experts advise that every minute of screen time (TV, Wii, iPad, Leapster, computers, or other electronic device) should be matched with a minute of physical activity. So, if your child watches 30 minutes of Dora the Explorer, she should have at least 30 minutes of active play.
- Play outdoors (a yard, a playground, or a park) with your child: run, jump, climb, play catch, or play tag.
- Have your own "dance show". Turn on the radio and dance. Your child may even like to make a dance costume out of paper or old clothes.
- Take the stairs with your child – rather than the elevator or escalator – whenever you can!

Book Suggestion

The Monster Healthy Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy,
Being Active & Feeling Great for Monsters & Kids by Edward Miller