

# *Healthy Eating Habits to Create Happy Children*



## **Learning the Food Groups**

- <https://youtu.be/L9ymkJK2QCU>
- This video teaches young children about the 5 food groups. It's important for children to be able to identify the different groups and understand that they need to consume foods every day from each of the groups. This knowledge can help children learn to self-monitor their eating habits. Make sure to emphasize to your child that at least half of what they consume daily should come from the fruit and vegetable group.
- Test your child at least once daily and ask them to name the food groups on their plate.

## **Eating Vegetables**

- <https://youtu.be/gV9386Jv21c>
- This video talks about the importance of eating green vegetables. Some children may avoid or refuse to eat vegetables, especially green vegetables. This video illustrates the many benefits of eating green vegetables in a child-friendly manner.

## **Exploring Food Groups**

- <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>
- This resource is excellent for tweens and teens. It allows you to click on a food group, read about it, and provides a table that explains how much of the food should be consumed daily by age. For example, teenage girls should consume 1.5 cups of fruit daily and teenage boys should consume 1.5-2 cups of fruit daily.
- Encourage your child to create a one-page outline of how much of each food group they should be consuming daily based on their age.

## **Top 15 Ways to Keep a Healthy You**

- <https://foodplay.com/downloads/FreeMaterials/Teens/winningways.pdf>
- This information sheet is great for older children and teenagers to read and understand a comprehensive summary of important things to keep in mind for healthy eating.
- Encourage your child to discuss at least 3 concepts they learned from the information sheet and 3 concepts they can apply to their lives every day and how.
- It's important for children and teenagers to develop their own strategies and solutions for healthier eating. Kids are often told what they should and should not be eating. A more effective strategy is for kids to learn to set these limits for themselves. They will be more likely to stick to a healthier lifestyle this way.

## Apps:

**Nicholas' Garden**- This app takes nutrition one step further by not only teaching kids about basic nutrition, but also about cooking processes and shopping. A big part of navigating the world we live in while making healthy choices involves consumerism. This application lightly touches on the concept in an engaging manner so that children can make healthier, more informed choices themselves about food in their day to day. Beware, your kid will keep an eye on you when putting items in the shopping cart at the grocery store after a few games on Nicholas' Garden.

**Eat-And-Move-O-Matic** - This basic yet fun app developed for the *Youth Voice: Youth Choice* program in the U.S. simply takes foods commonly consumed by kids, provides the nutrition label breakdown, then recommends a fun physical activity with time duration to burn off those calories. This application really takes the association between nutrition and exercise and puts it into a context kids can understand.

**Gro Garden** - Gro Garden creates an online atmosphere where kids can learn all about sustainable farming and gardening in a very entertaining manner. Players feed Connie the Compost, the star of the show, and her micro-organism buddies. After feeding kids get to witness Connie and company produce fruitful soil which allows bountiful crops to grow faster, more nutritious, and tastier. The seed-to-table concept is at play as kids get to treat animals residing within the Gro Garden cottage with a nutritious meal of organic vegetables. Children are rewarded for their efforts as they progress through the game with virtual goodies and badges, instilling a strong sense of pride in their efforts.

**Healthy Heroes 1 & 2: Nutrition for Kids** - This game helps kids recognize healthy foods and the value of healthy eating habits. Kids play the part of Healthy Heroes and attempt to save the city of Yogopolis from Hungry Monsters. By fending off the Hungry Monsters with fruits and vegetables, children can learn what foods fit into these nutrition-packed food groups.

**Perfect Picnic** - A component of food preparation that isn't often introduced to young people is the importance of food safety. This app does it very well by teaching food safety within the

context of creating a safe picnic. Kids learn the importance of washing their hands before handling food, using a thermometer to monitor food temperatures, maintaining clean preparation surfaces, and keeping perishable foods at safe temperatures. This is a very useful app for children, especially since we are dealing with the Corona Virus.

**Veggie Circus Farm** - An app for children as young as two years old, Veggie Circus Farm helps children recognize all different types of vegetables and their nutrition benefits, and increases literacy skills at the same time.

**This Is My Food** – Nutrition for Kids This app allows children to discover interesting facts about the food they eat. It includes information on food categories, classifications, nutrient benefits, and the digestive process. This Is My Food utilizes a highly interactive graphical format so kids aged 4 and above can learn through exploration. They will gradually learn about topics like grocery shopping, meal ideas, and developing positive dietary habits.