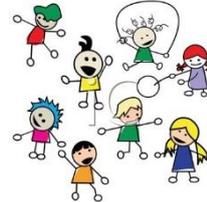


## Benefits of healthy eating for children.

Research into the eating habits we develop as children has suggested that a healthy diet during the early years means we stand a good chance of carrying these habits throughout our lives. In short, educating children on healthy eating can lay the path for a healthy life.

Eating well and engaging in regular physical activity can help children to:

- develop strong bones
- grow healthily
- concentrate at school
- maintain a healthy weight
- stay active and alert.



On a long-term basis, maintaining a healthy diet throughout childhood and into adulthood could also hold significant benefits, including helping to lower the risk of the following:

- type 2 diabetes
- high blood pressure
- cholesterol levels
- heart disease
- stroke
- joint problems
- breathing problems
- being overweight or obese.



### Food groups for Children

Just like the rest of the family, children need to eat a wide variety of foods in order to get the nutrients essential to their health. There are five key food groups that need to be incorporated into children's diets, and the first step to ensure that you are making the most of each meal and snack is to learn your way around them:

**Fruit and vegetables** fruit and veg are a fantastic source of vitamins, minerals and fibre - so whether fresh, frozen, dried or canned, try to incorporate them into every meal. Aim to incorporate a minimum of five portions of fruit and/or vegetables into your child's diet each day.

**Starchy foods - potatoes, pasta, rice, bread** kinds of foods provide energy, nutrients and some fibre and they should be the main part of each meal.

**Milk and dairy** the calcium present in milk and dairy are essential for the development of strong bones and teeth. Dairy is also a rich source of vitamin A, which can help the body to fight infections while keeping our skin and eyes healthy.

**Non-dairy protein - meat, fish, eggs, beans** meat, fish, eggs and pulses are a fantastic source of protein and iron - both of which are essential for growth and development.

**Fats and sugars** this food group covers butter, cream, chocolate, crisps, sweets, cooking oils and sugary drinks - all of which provide lots of energy but very few nutrients. As children get older they need less fat in their diets. By the time your child is five, they should be eating a low-fat diet like the one recommended for adults.

Visit the change for life website for more useful information [www.nhs.uk/changeforlife](http://www.nhs.uk/changeforlife)