

Monkey see Monkey Do: How to get children to follow healthy habits

It is important for children to learn academic and educational skills in school. What is often given less of a focus is education around healthy eating and activity. Parents can take a lead on this and help their children learn the benefits of healthy eating and activity habits.



Here are a few easy steps to help you create a positive environment for your children to learn and practice healthy eating and activity habits:

- ✓ Have breakfast every day and include a balance of whole grain breads, fruit and dairy.
- ✓ If possible, eat meals with your children. This will show your children that you value a healthy diet and can be an opportunity to introduce new healthy foods to children (if they see you enjoying a new food, they may be more willing to try it too)
- ✓ Minimize distractions at meals- turn off the TV and do not allow phones or tablets during meals. This will place the focus on the table and the food and encourage conversation. Remember to put down your phone as well-if you are on your phone or other devices while trying to tell your children to cut back on their stuff, it will be a hard sell.
- ✓ Allow children to have more control over their plate-have them serve up their own portions. Trust them when they state they are full and start to build a positive relationship at the table with them.
- ✓ Involve children in the meal planning and preparation- take them shopping with you at the grocery store. This is a great opportunity to see and talk about healthy food options that are available to them.
- ✓ Leading by example is the best way to encourage increased physical activity. Try to have family activities that involve exercise, such as sledding, walks, bike rides or swimming. Incorporate children's ideas for fun family activities.
- ✓ Try little things to increase activity when out with your children-- park the furthest away in the parking lot or take the stairs.
- ✓ Create a plan with your child to limit electronic time. This will allow both of you to have an understanding of what is considered fair use, and encourage time together doing other activities.

***For more information and great Kid-Friendly recipes check out Eat Right Ontario:
<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/>***

Kid-Approved Recipe: Breakfast Quesadillas

Cook Time: 5 minutes

Makes: 1 quesadilla

Serving Size: 1 quesadilla

Get the quesadilla ready in the refrigerator the night before so all you have to do is cook it in the pan in the morning. Easy to eat on the run too!



Ingredients

- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 whole wheat flour tortilla
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) diced red sweet pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) shredded applewood smoked cheddar

Directions

1. Spray small nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat over medium heat.
2. Add egg and cook, stirring for about 2 minutes or until large curds set. Remove from heat.
3. Lay tortilla on work surface and spread scrambled egg over half of the tortilla.
4. Sprinkle with pepper and cheddar. Fold over tortilla to cover.
5. Heat nonstick skillet over medium low heat and toast quesadilla, turning once for about 2 minutes or until golden on both sides.
6. Cut in half to enjoy.

Tip

You can add some more colour and veggies to the quesadilla by chopping 1/2 cup (125 mL) of baby spinach leaves and stirring it into the eggs while cooking or sprinkling it over top of the peppers before toasting the quesadilla.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories: 322 kcal, Protein: 15.6 g, Fat: 15.1 g, Carbohydrate: 29.9 g, Fibre: 3.3 g, Sodium: 611 mg