



Parents decide: **What food is served**
When food is served

Children decide: **Whether or not to eat**
How much to eat

4 Years Old

Calcium

Two cups of milk a day is not enough now, your child will also need a serving of yogurt, cheese, tofu, or other source of calcium such as leafy greens-kale, bok choy and broccoli.

Snack Ideas for added calcium:

Grilled cheese sandwich

Plain yogurt with added fruit

Ice cream does have calcium but it is very high in fat. Have it occasionally when you go out.

Soda and Sweetened Drinks

Sweetened drinks like Hawaiian Sun juice, POG, soda and even 100% juice are one of the main contributors to children becoming overweight. They also cause dental cavities.

The average 12 ounce can of juice drink contains 9 teaspoons of sugar, a coca-cola contains 10 teaspoons. If your child drinks one can each day (other intake and activity remaining constant) they will gain 10 extra pounds in one year! The small size (16 ounce) of Jamba Juice has about 17 teaspoons of sugar!!

Don't give your child soda or beverages like Gatorade or Fruit Punch...they are loaded with sugar and calories. Instead increase your WATER consumption!!

Ideas:

If you choose to give your child juice, dilute 100% juice with water.

Serve water in your child's favorite cup, add a straw!

Add a slice of lemon or lime to the water.

Keep a container of water readily available in the refrigerator.

Keep a 6 pack of water in the car.

Be a good role model...drink water with your child.



Diet sodas aren't a good alternative. They don't quench thirst well, and they may actually increase the appetite which could cause increased weight gain, rather than avoiding it as you might expect.

Microwaved Food

There is a vast array of food available to microwave in individual portions for fast and easy meals at home.

There may be several reasons to avoid using these items as a regular habit.

Preparing individual servings makes it less likely that the family will sit down and eat together

Having choices available in the freezer may result in your child choosing to only eat a small variety of foods (perhaps pizza every night?). Being exposed to other foods during family mealtime is a good thing.

Microwaved foods aren't fresh and tend to be high in fat

Of course it is okay to use these foods sometimes, just try to make sure that it isn't a daily habit.

Developing Good Habits

Special occasions (birthdays, holidays) are often celebrated with special foods. For example, birthdays frequently include birthday cake and ice cream. It is worth considering that these foods are only special because they are not consumed every day. For a child who can have cake and ice cream whenever they want it, a birthday cake is nowhere near as special.

If your family usually eats dessert, consider eating yogurt parfaits, fresh fruit, frozen bananas or other healthy choices instead of cakes and pies.

You may want to reserve special foods for special days; you'll all get more enjoyment out of them.

Screen Time

Parents should monitor and limit the amount of time their children spend watching TV or videos and/or playing on a computer according to the American Academy or Pediatrics. Time spent before a screen usually means less time to play actively. The more hours spent in front of a screen, the higher the risk of obesity.

Activity

Four year olds may be interested in tumbling, dancing, learning to balance and skip. They may also be ready to start to learn the skills for the organized sports that may interest them later: T-ball, basketball, soccer for example.

Four year olds are capable of learning to swim quite well. This is not only a fun activity for kids, it is an important skill to help keep them safe. If your child doesn't like to get his face wet, you can start off slow by encouraging him to learn to blow bubbles in the bath tub at home where he has full control of the experience. Swim lessons won't be fun until he isn't scared of the water.

It is also important for children to engage in unstructured play with other children where they choose what activities will be interesting at the moment. (They still need supervision so that they are safe).