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# Share the Wellness Tip

## Planning Healthy Choices Can Help the Battle against Childhood Obesity

There is good news in the battle against childhood obesity. Recently, a new report from Journal of the American Medical Association finds that childhood obesity in toddlers age 2 to 5 has lowered from 13.9 percent in 2003-04 to 8.4 percent in 2011-12.

What has caused this change? There are several theories at play. Here are a few of them:

- ♣ New federal nutritional guidelines have trickled down to state and local programs, such as encouraging increased consumption of water and 100 percent fruit juice, limiting serving sizes and limiting time in front of the television.
- ♣ Food companies have limited television advertisements targeting children. Between 2003 and 2007, the daily exposure of a child, age 2 to 5, to food ads fell by 13.7 percent.
- ♣ A number of national campaigns have promoted healthy eating among children, such as first lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative.

What can you do in your home to promote healthy eating? One important way is to set a good example if you want your kids to eat right. When parents eat more fruits and vegetables, the kids will often eat more as well. Planning ahead can also help. Keep your pantry or refrigerator stocked with healthy foods that are easy to prepare.

- ♣ Put fresh fruit in a bowl at eye level in the refrigerator or on the kitchen counter. It will be easier to see and grab for a quick snack.
- ♣ "Ants on a log" (celery with peanut butter and raisins)
- ♣ Fresh or canned fruit (in 100% juice, not syrup) with fat-free or low-fat vanilla yogurt
- ♣ Whole-grain crackers with fat-free or low-fat cheese
- ♣ Unsalted pretzels or air-popped popcorn
- ♣ Whole-wheat pita bread or cut up vegetables (peppers, carrots, etc.) with hummus
- ♣ Fat-free or low-fat milk or water instead of sugary fruit drinks and soda

Try this easy after school snack:

### **PeeWee Pizzas**

Directions:

1. Lay out several whole-wheat crackers.
2. Lay a piece of baby spinach and a slice of tomato on half of the crackers.
3. On the rest of the crackers, place a few small pieces of low-fat chicken and onion. sprinkle all of the crackers with your favorite cheese.
4. Put the "pizzas" in the microwave and heat until the cheese is melted, about 30 seconds.

*Sources: The Washington Post; Choosemyplate.gov*

