

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

Eating disorders are on the rise in children and youth. Parents play a big role in helping children have a healthy relationship with food and eating.

Ways to help children develop a healthy relationship with food:

- ◆ Provide a sense of food security by offering 3 meals and 2-3 snacks daily.
- ◆ Offer a variety of foods. Don't make separate meals for your child.
- ◆ Let children decide whether to eat and how much to eat.
- ◆ Avoid commenting on how much or how little your child eats.
- ◆ If your child refuses to eat, remove uneaten food without comment. A skipped meal will not harm a healthy child.
- ◆ Avoid coaxing, bribing or forcing kids to eat – this increases the risk of food and eating problems.
- ◆ See more tips at [Island Health | Reframing Picky Eating](#).

Children learn by watching adults - sit down and eat with children as often as possible. More tips for positive mealtimes:

- ◆ Put on calm music, dim the lights, mute phones, turn off screens.
- ◆ Engage in friendly conversation – check out [Island Health | Let's Talk Mealtime Cards](#).
- ◆ Tell family stories – this helps kids feel safe and connected.

If you're worried about your child's growth or nutrition, contact your health provider. You can also call or email a HealthLink BC Dietitian free of charge (see below).

For more information:

- ◆ [Island Health | Public Health Nutrition](#)
- ◆ [Ellyn Satter | Eat & Feed with Joy](#)
- ◆ [HealthLink BC Dietitian Services](#) call (8-1-1) or email a Dietitian
- ◆ [Canada's Food Guide](#)

Public Health Units: [www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations](http://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations)

Healthy Schools: [www.islandhealth.ca/healthyschools](http://www.islandhealth.ca/healthyschools)