HEALTHY DIET TIPS FOR PARENTS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Help children to eat breakfast.

- Provide healthy foods that are fast and convenient: yogurt, cottage cheese, fruit, low-fat whole-grain bars, fresh fruit pieces.
- Help your child get organized so that he or she has time to eat breakfast.
- Prepare the breakfast the night before. (If breakfast is prepared and ready in advance, the school-age child is more likely to eat, not having to wait for food to be prepared that morning. Examples are hard-boiled eggs and whole wheat waffles, that now just need to be warmed up in the microwave in the morning, and oranges that are peeled the night before and ready to eat.)
- Offer food on the run, if your child is late, such as fruit, trail mix, or a whole-grain breakfast bar.

Help children eat more fruits and vegetables.

- Keep a variety of fruits and vegetables on hand at home.
- Have cleaned and cut-up fruits and vegetables available and in the refrigerator for snacking.
- Serve two or more vegetables with dinner.
- Serve salads that include a variety of vegetables.
- Pack fruits or vegetables cut and ready to eat in your child’s back pack to eat at school.
- Use vegetables in soups, casseroles, and sauces.
- Be a role model for your child; eat more fruits and vegetables yourself.
- Plant a garden.

Help children get enough calcium in their diet.

- Serve low-fat or fat-free milk at every meal.
- Cut up cheese cubes, or have string cheese for snacking.
- Keep flavored yogurts and puddings made with low-fat or no-fat milk available.
- Serve broccoli and collard and turnip greens, all high in calcium.

Eat healthy together as a family.

- Make grocery shopping and food preparation a family activity.
- When eating together, turn the TV off, don’t answer the phone, spend time talking about your day.

Encourage children to eat healthy foods.

- Serve new foods and regional and ethnic foods.
- Don’t fight over food with your child/teenager.
- Keep a variety of healthy foods in the house.
- Limit the availability of high-fat and high-sugar foods.

Help teens make healthy choices when away from home.

- Encourage your teenager to buy healthy foods at school, stores, restaurants, and vending machines.
- Look at menus with your teenager and discuss healthy food choices and appropriate portions. Find foods low in fat, sugar, and calories.
Box 29.1 (Continued)

- Encourage your teenager to eat salads with low-calorie dressings, and broiled or baked meats.
- Encourage your teenager to avoid eating fried foods, or to reduce the serving size.
- Teach your teenager to ask for changes to make foods healthier, such as asking the waitress to “hold the mayonnaise.”

Help children and teens be more active.

- Encourage active, spur-of-the-moment physical activity, such as dancing to music.
- Limit the time your child watches television and plays computer games to 1 or 2 hours a day.
- For every hour your child reads, watches television, and plays computer games, encourage him or her to take a 10-minute physical activity break.
- Give your child household chores, such as shoveling snow, raking leaves, or walking the dog.
- Help your child find physical activities that are fun and not too difficult or embarrassing.
- Use the stairs instead of taking an elevator, walk instead of riding in a car whenever daily life allows.
- Enroll your child in planned physical activities such as swimming, martial arts, or dancing.
- Participate in physical activity together: play ball, go bowling, biking, and skating.