

4 HEALTH & builders



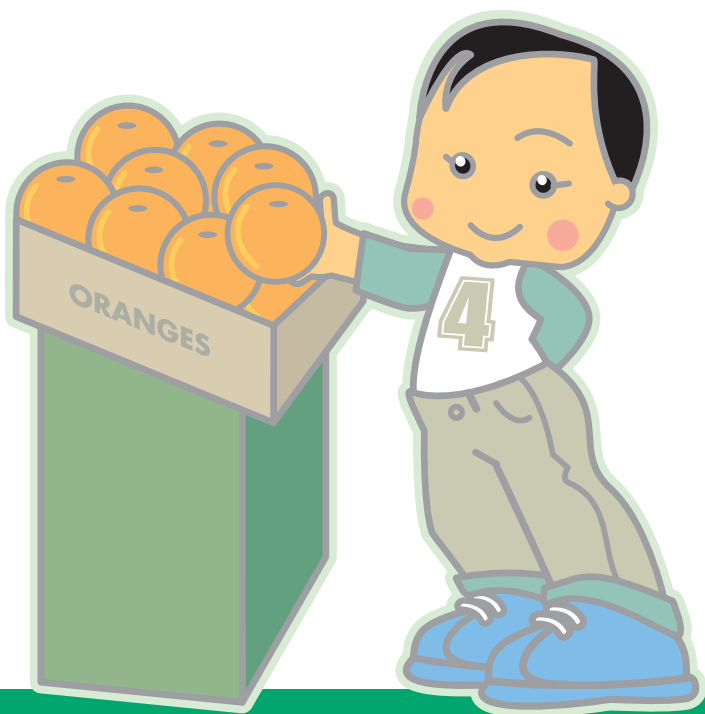
Healthy Me Board

Help your child think of ways she can make healthy choices every day. Tape a large piece of paper up on her wall or on the refrigerator – somewhere she can reach it and see it often. Make up a title for the poster, like **I am SO healthy!** Together think of two or three things that your child does or can do to be healthy, like **Make up a healthy new snack**. Or, **Play jumping games with my friends**. Or, **Go to the dentist**. Help her write these ideas on pieces of paper or sticky notes and put them on the poster. Every time your child thinks of a healthy thing to do, help her write it down and tape it on her poster. Try to think of at least one thing each day for a week.



Making Lunch

If your child takes a lunch to daycare or preschool, plan a healthy lunch menu together. If your child is at home, plan a healthy picnic together. Let your preschooler help shop for the food or help pack the lunch. Talk about why it is important to eat many different kinds of foods (milk products, meats and beans, fruits and vegetables, and grains and cereals). Let him create a healthy menu by choosing food he likes from each of these groups, or making up a new item that uses foods from a few of the food groups together. Make it fun by letting him help cut the fruit or vegetables, or by letting him make it different than usual, like cutting an apple into many thin slices, or cutting a sandwich into triangle shapes.



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four and five year olds

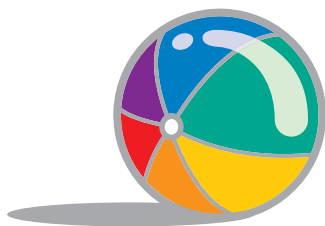
It's Fun to Move!

It is important to make family exercise a part of every day. Talk with your child about how important it is to use her muscles and get her body moving – her heart and lungs and blood – every day in order to stay strong and healthy. Help her think of activities she likes to do that get her body moving, like playing tag, jumping rope, dancing, playing at the park or taking a walk. Add some things that other members of your family like to do. At least once each day, do one of these activities together. After you do the activity, talk together about how she feels. Was it fun? Was it hard work? What does her body feel like after she's been moving?

Some ideas for family exercise are:

- Going for a short walk around the block
- Dancing to music in the house
- Working out to an exercise video
- Playing a sport together at the park

Be sure to have fun!



Harmful Things

Even at four or five years old, it's not too early to start talking to your child about things that can harm his body like smoking or taking drugs. Your preschooler is too young to understand a lot of technical words, and probably won't sit still for a long lecture. But you can start to teach him about actions and consequences, and how to make choices for himself. Talk with your child about his actions, and the results of those actions, whenever you think of it. For example, if he touches a hot stove, he will get a burn. Or if he eats too much or drinks too fast, he can get a stomach ache. Give him chances to make choices on his own – what he wants to wear or what he wants to eat for a snack. Give him praise for making good choices. By talking about actions and consequences and letting him make choices, your child is learning to act on his own and building confidence in his choices. He is also learning that there are results to his actions and he is responsible for his actions. Take time to talk about smoking and drugs and the harmful results these actions can have on his body. Since your child learns from your actions, model the behavior you want from your child (for example, using oven mitts with a hot oven, wearing a seatbelt, or not smoking).

Sing and Brush

It is important to teach your child good tooth brushing habits while she is still young. Twice a day, she should be spending about three minutes brushing her teeth.

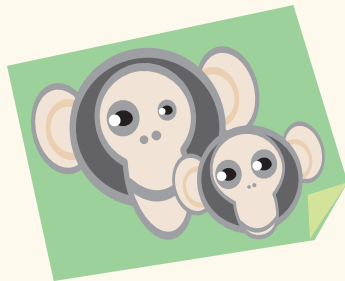
A good way to help her get in this habit is to sing a song while she is brushing. Find a song that has a lot of verses and start singing it as she starts brushing. She will know it is time to stop when the song is over. Talk to her about brushing every tooth, front and back. At this age, it is a good idea for you to help her for the last minute to make sure that all of the areas of her teeth and gums are clean. If you do this with her a number of times, she will get in the habit of taking a little longer and doing a great job.



How Tall?

It is fun for your child to see how he is growing. Find a place in your home where you can keep a record of his height, like the back of a door, a door frame, or a wall inside a closet. Each month, measure your child and make a mark for his height (you can write on a piece of masking tape if you don't want to write on the wall). Write the date next to the mark. Talk about the foods that he eats and how they are helping him grow. Remind him that a good night's sleep will give his body time to grow. He will enjoy measuring his progress for years to come!





Age 5

— Age 4

— Age 3

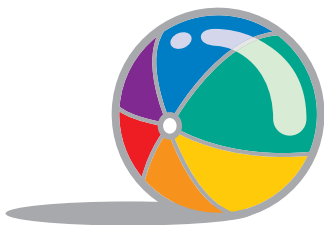
— Age 2

— Age 1



Scrub-a-Dub

It is important that your child learns how to wash her hands properly. If she does, she will get sick less often, and will be less likely to pass germs to the rest of the family. A fun way to teach your child to wash her hands is to put some washable child's paint on her hands and have her rub it all over them. If you don't have any washable paint, try using ketchup! Tell her that you are going to pretend that the paint is "germs." Explain to her that we can't see germs, so we have to wash every part of our hands to make sure that we don't have any left. Help her use soap to wash off the paint. Show her how it is harder to get it out from around and under her fingernails. After she is finished, talk to your child about when she should be washing her hands such as before she eats, after she comes in from outside, after she goes to the bathroom, and after she blows or wipes her nose.



Good Night

Before your child starts school, it is important to get him on a schedule that includes plenty of sleep. Slowly start moving your child's bedtime earlier and earlier until he is going to sleep around eight o'clock. This way he will be able to get 10-12 hours of sleep and still wake up in time to have a healthy breakfast and get ready for school without being rushed or tired. Think about creating a relaxing environment before bedtime, like a warm bath and story time. If your child is still napping, begin to wake him up earlier so that he will be ready for bed and able to fall asleep.



Family Tooth Brushing

Brushing her teeth can be one of those chores that your child resists. One way to make it easier is to make it a family event. Create a routine where once a day everyone in the family brushes their teeth at the same time (pick a time when this works best for your family). You can make it fun by using a timer and seeing who can brush for three minutes. Or put on a song that you always brush to.



Block the Sun

The sun can be dangerous to your child's skin. If you are planning a day outside, make sure that your child is protected with sun block. Make putting on sun block part of a "getting ready" routine and checklist. Say something like:

We're getting ready to go. Do we have a drink and snack to take with us?

Let your child say "check" when you have the drinks and snack.

Did we put on sun block? (Check)

Did we pack our toys? (Check).

Does Mommy have her purse? (Check).

Okay, let's go!

If you think your child does not burn easily, he should still have sun block – because a burn is not the only way that the sun can cause damage! And since the sun can do damage even when it is covered by clouds, use sun block on cloudy days too.

Notes