

## **~ A Message From Your School Nurse ~**

### **Healthy Eating and Physical Activity . . . A Gift to Your Children**

Parents play a big role in shaping children's eating habits. When parents eat a variety of foods that are low in fat and sugar and high in fiber, children learn to like these foods as well. It may take 10 or more tries before a child accepts a new food, so do not give up if your child does not like a new food right away.

Parents have an effect on children's physical activity habits as well. You can set a good example by going for a walk or bike ride after dinner instead of watching TV.

- Make sure your child eats breakfast. Breakfast provides children with the energy they need to listen and learn in school.
- Offer your child a wide variety of foods, such as grains, vegetables and fruits, low-fat dairy products, and lean meats or beans.
- Talk to your health care provider if you are concerned about your child's eating habits or weight.
- Cook with less fat—bake, roast, or poach foods instead of frying.
- Limit the amount of added sugar in your child's diet. Serve water or low-fat milk more often than sugar-sweetened sodas and fruit-flavored drinks.
- Involve your child in planning and preparing meals. Children may be more willing to eat the dishes they help fix.
- Be a role model for your children. If they see you being physically active and having fun, they are more likely to be active and stay active throughout their lives.
- Encourage your child to be active every day.
- Involve the whole family in activities like hiking, biking, dancing, basketball, or roller-skating.