



Let go a little to gain a lot

Do you ever worry that your child is not eating enough food or enough variety of foods? Many of us do. But sometimes as parents or caregivers we need to step back and let our children do what comes naturally to them. When children come to the table and we let them choose what they would like from the healthy foods that we have offered, children eat well. They are more likely to eat enough, try new foods, and mealtimes are more enjoyable for everyone.

Think beyond a single meal

Children may not eat much at some meals. This is normal and happens for many reasons: maybe they were not hungry, did not like what was offered, were not feeling well, or were distracted by things going on around them.

A child's appetite can vary day to day and meal to meal. Instead of looking at only one meal, consider what your child has eaten over the day or over several days.

Remember:

- A routine that includes healthy meals and snacks gives your child the chance to get a variety of foods their body needs over time.
- A mealtime routine also lets your child feel safe refusing a meal, or eating very little, knowing that another meal or snack will be offered in a few hours.
- Before eating, a child's stomach is only about the size of their fist.
- Children will eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full. Trust them to do this at every meal and snack.



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Call Health Connections with your nutrition questions at [905-546-3550](tel:905-546-3550), like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HealthyFamiliesHamilton or visit www.hamilton.ca/nutrition.