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Amplifying Life

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Healthy Tips for Families

Part of choosing to be healthy means reminding ourselves from time to time of things that we can do to improve our health. I would like to take the time to share with you some healthy tips on choosing to be healthy. You may not feel like you can tackle a whole list of healthy habits to implement at once. Choose one and focus on that habit every day for a couple of weeks before adding another. If you feel like you are currently choosing many of the healthy choices on the list, read through to evaluate if there is something you can improve on or a single habit you can try to add.

Remember, that healthy kids learn easier and are able to concentrate better. Eating smart and moving more help adults feel good, look good and do our best as well. Kids who eat breakfast have a better attitude toward school and are better able to concentrate in class. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day; don't overlook it. Think ahead and have easy and healthy breakfast foods on hand so everyone can have something before they head out the door.

Let's talk about physical activity. Children should get one hour of physical activity every day and adults need at least thirty minutes. Look for ways to add activity to your day by turning off the TV, playing outside, play tag, or take a walk together. This doesn't have to be running or playing sports, but moving our bodies. Help kids to develop good eating and physical activity habits to help them stay healthier throughout their life.

Use mealtime to build family relationships and talk about nutrition. Turn off the TV and share about your day. Modeling healthy food choices encourages children to do the same. All foods fit into the MyPlate. Use MyPlate as a guide when choosing and preparing meals at home. The key components from the MyPlate are: make half your plate fruits and vegetables, half of your grain should be whole-grains, choose lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products. Homemade Pizza can make a fast, easy meal that can be healthy; choose lean protein and add the veggies to increase the nutritional value.

Half of the plate should be fruits and vegetables; canned, frozen, fresh and dried all have nutrients your body needs. Fruits and vegetables come in a rainbow of colors; eating the color of the rainbows helps assure you get the many nutrients you need. Whole grains can be increase by substituting half of the flour or pasta with the equivalent in a whole-grain variety. Whole grains are packed with healthy nutrients – B

vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber as well as providing a feeling of fullness. Drinking water instead of soda is healthier for you. Drink milk to get the much needed calcium in your diet. Bones take in the most calcium between the ages of 9-19; the best sources are low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.

For more information on healthy eating tips, feel free to contact me. Shandi Andres, Flint Hills Extension District, 501 W Main, Council Grove, KS 66846. (620) 767-5136 or sdandres@ksu.edu