



Let's be healthy together!

EATING THE RIGHT STUFF

*best start
meilleur départ*

by/par health *nexus* santé

Book title: *Let's Be Healthy Together: Eating the Right Stuff.*
Copyright 2010 Health Nexus.

ISBN: 978-0-9866907-0-9

Date published: August 2010

Health Nexus acknowledges funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to develop this book, part of our project called *Let's Be Healthy Together: Preventing Childhood Obesity in Ontario's Aboriginal Communities.*

This book should be cited as:

Best Start Resource Centre (2010). *Let's Be Healthy Together: Eating the Right Stuff.* Toronto: Health Nexus.

For questions or copyright requests, please contact:

Best Start Resource Centre, Health Nexus

Web: www.healthnexus.ca

Email: beststart@healthnexus.ca

We acknowledge:

- **Advisory council:** Cathy Alisch, Bernadette deGonzague, October Fostey, Kelly Gordon, Alethea Kewayosh (past member), Heidi Langille, Dr. Lynn Lavallée, Esther McKay (past member), Sarah Parr, Lynne Picotte, Monique Raymond-Lefebvre, Dale Xilon
- **Key informants:** Michael Auksi, Ellen Blais, Sabrina Boucher, Jeffrey Cyr, Joanne Dallaire (Shadow Hawk Woman), Donelda DeLaRonde, Melanie Francis, Kelly Gordon, Lucie Idlout, Miche Jetté, Jaime Koebel, Cory Koski, Heidi Langille, Dr. Lynn Lavallée, Diane Longboat (Kahontakwas), Laura Spero
- **Guest editor:** Kelly Gordon, Registered Dietitian
- **Writer and project manager:** Melanie Ferris

Many thanks to the Best Start team, our graphic designers, our photographers, and our models for this project.

Disclaimer: The information in this book is based on current evidence and practices. In no way is the information meant to replace the advice of a health care provider. Health Nexus, its Aboriginal advisory council, and the key informants accept no liability for errors, omissions, or any consequences arising from the use of this information. We recommend that you always follow the advice of your health care provider. Health Nexus and the Ontario Trillium Foundation do not necessarily endorse the resources and services mentioned in this book.



1 Why we developed this book3

2 Family health and well-being.....7

How healthy eating leads to good health.....	7
Eating Well with <i>Canada's Food Guide for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis</i>	10
Traditional foods and healthier ways to prepare meals.....	13
Where to access country or traditional foods.....	15
How to eat healthy and manage your weight.....	16
How to shop on a budget for healthier foods	20
How to find or organize a farmer's market	22
Healthy eating during pregnancy	25
Free programs to try for the whole family.....	26

3 Feeding your baby29

Why breastfeeding is so healthy	29
Introducing foods to your baby	31
Guidelines for introducing solid foods to your baby	34
Get your child involved in cooking	36
Free programs to try for newborn babies and young toddlers	37

4 Feeding your child39

How much food a child should eat.....	39
Tips for making healthier lunches and snacks	40
Teaching your child to help you make healthy meals	44
Free programs to try for children ages 2 to 6.....	48

References51

***Our people have
the answers.***

*~Mohawk teacher Diane
Longboat, Six Nations*



1 Why we developed this book

By Melanie Ferris, Ojibwe/Sioux mother and Aboriginal health promotion consultant at Health Nexus

On behalf of Health Nexus and our Aboriginal advisory council, I am happy to invite you to learn from our *Let's Be Healthy Together* series.

Health Nexus is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting health for more than 25 years. Health Nexus developed these tools using evidence-based health information as well as through interviewing a range of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis parents, role models, and service providers. You'll see quotes from the Aboriginal people we interviewed throughout our books.

This book is for Aboriginal parents and families raising children between the ages of 0 to 6 in Ontario. Our tools are designed to help "you" think about ways of raising healthy children. We focus on nutrition in this book to give you some ideas to help prevent obesity amongst your children. Other books in this series focus on physical activity as well as spiritual and mental well-being.

Many of the tips in this book are also available in video or audio format. For other learning tools in our *Let's Be Healthy Together* series, please visit us online at www.letsbehealthy.ca.

Words We Use

Some of the words that we use in this book include:

- **Aboriginal:** This is a word to describe First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. These are the first peoples of Canada.
- **Diet:** A diet is simply all of the foods that you eat. It doesn't have to be low-calorie or low-fat.
- **Elder:** A respected person in an Aboriginal community who is valued for their wisdom and life experience.
- **Healing:** For many Aboriginal people, our healing processes are often related to things such as residential schools, foster care, the sixties scoop, etc. For some people, healing happens when they get in touch with their cultural identity by exploring things such as ceremonies and teachings.
- **Nutrition:** This is how your body uses food. It breaks food down into nutrients that your body can then use for growth and development.
- **Obesity:** This is a medical condition where your body has too much fat on it. Obesity is linked to a shorter life expectancy and increased health risks. Ask your doctor how to measure obesity for your age and body size.
- **Physical activity:** This is simply moving your body and getting active. Some people also call it exercise, but physical activity could be gardening, hunting, trapping, or dancing.
- **Service provider:** This is any person who provides care to you, such as a doctor, nurse, teacher, etc.

Why focus on obesity?

Childhood obesity is a growing concern for all people in Canada. As Aboriginal people, we are especially concerned because we have poorer health than other Canadians. Our poor health status is closely connected to poverty, isolation, and the move away from our traditional lifestyles.

In the olden times, the father, actually, was sort of, he would be expected to bring in the food, in the old days, to a certain extent where I was growing up there was a little bit of that left.

~Mohawk Elder Ernest Benedict as quoted from *In the Words of Elders*

“We know what we need to be healthy” is something that many Aboriginal people told us during our research for this project.

We have always been healthy until we started to adapt to the modern lifestyle. Similar to other populations in developed countries (Wabitsch 2006), we are now seeing obesity as a common problem because our bodies are not used to being inactive and having to digest unhealthy foods.

If our children become overweight or obese, they could have shorter lives than their parents. They could also:

- Develop chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes
- Have a hard time breathing, moving their joints, etc.
- Experience self-esteem and social isolation issues in school
- Grow into overweight or obese adults, always struggling with their weight
- Place a burden on the health care system

Why use this book?

Use this book to learn more about how you can give your child the best start in life when it comes to eating good food. Throughout the book you’ll find phone numbers and website links to free programs and resources that can help your family be healthy. Look for the other books in our *Let’s Be Healthy* series if you’d like more ideas about getting active and building healthy communities.

Other books in this series include:

- *Creating Healthy Communities*
- *Getting Active Today*
- *Prevent Obesity: A Guide for Service Providers*



It's really important to delay introducing sugar to children as late as you can. You can't stop it once they get into it.

~Swampy Cree Elder Joanne Dallaire



2 Family health and well-being

This section covers:

- How healthy eating leads to good health
- Eating well with *Canada's Food Guide*
- Reading and understanding food labels
- Traditional foods and healthier ways to prepare meals
- Where to access country or traditional foods
- How to eat well and manage your weight
- How to shop on a budget for healthy foods
- Finding or organizing a farmer's market
- Healthy eating during pregnancy
- Free programs you can try



How healthy eating leads to good health

Our bodies are like machines. Ojibwe student Michael Auksi says that one way to talk to your child about healthy eating is by comparing your child's body to a cool car. Your child might understand that a cool car needs premium fuel in order to run at its best. A child's body is just like that—it needs premium fuel to run at its best as well.

Premium food includes things like:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Healthy whole grain products such as oatmeal, wild or brown rice, whole wheat bread, etc.
- Dairy products that are not too high in fat and milk alternatives (such as fortified soy milk)
- Healthy meats and meat alternatives (such as beans, fish, and eggs)

Foods that do not help a child's body run well include:

- “Junk” or “sometimes” food such as chips and candy
- Ice cream and frozen desserts
- Processed foods
- Fast foods such as French fries
- Sugary drinks, including pop, juice, sports, and “energy” drinks



Did you know?

Hot dogs are a processed food.

What are processed foods?

Processed foods have a longer shelf life than fresh foods. Processed foods are taken from their original “whole” form and changed through various methods and techniques into another form, one that is more marketable.

How do these foods affect us?

Unhealthy foods often have food additives in them. These are added to foods during processing. This makes them:

- look better;
- taste better; and/or
- last longer.

Some people are not aware of what is really healthy... labels might say, “It’s fruit,” but it’s not really fruit, just not being clear about those kinds of things... that can be confusing for some people.

~Melanie Francis, Healthy Babies Healthy Children program worker, M’Chigeeng Health Centre



Many additives have little or no nutritional value. Some additives can cause reactions in sensitive people, so the labels must identify them. Reactions can range from mild to severe.

Try to stay away from food additives by feeding your family a diet of “whole” foods. These are foods in their original form. They do not have preservatives or other ingredients added to them. These are things like fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, plain rice, etc.

If you are feeding your child a diet of processed foods, it is hard to figure out which ingredients are causing stress to your child’s system.

Things to try:

- Always look at the list of ingredients on food packages. If it is really long or there are items on the list that you don’t

Many programs help you eat healthier by providing good quality snacks, organizing community kitchens, and might even give you fresh fruits and vegetables to take home with you... the best part? These programs are completely free! Check out the free programs listed throughout this book.

recognize or cannot read, then perhaps try to find another product with less ingredients.

- Try to buy foods that are not in boxes, cans, plastic wrapping, etc. These packaged foods tend to have been processed. They’ll have long lists of ingredients.

Remember... this is what we are putting into our bodies and our children’s bodies!



**Fast fact:
Who can help?**

If you’re concerned about your weight, or your child’s health, there are many different people who can help. Make an appointment with your community health representative, a nurse, a dietitian, or a doctor.



Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis

If your whole family is healthy, your young child is more likely to be healthy. Use Canada's food guide for detailed information to help you make sure everyone in your family is getting what they need.

The food guide is nice to look at and easy to understand. It explains things such as:

- What a portion size for a child looks like
- What foods are good choices
- Ideas for getting the correct number of servings you need each day

Ask your service provider for a copy of the food guide. You can also get it from Health Canada by:

- Downloading a copy at www.hc.gc.ca (look for the link to "Canada's Food Guide" on the right side of the page).
- Sending Health Canada an email with your mailing address and a request for a copy at publications@hc-sc.gc.ca
- Calling Health Canada toll free at 1.866.225.0709 or if you're in Ottawa, at 613.957.2991

- LOW FAT
- LOW SATURATED FAT
- TRANS FAT FREE
- HIGH SOURCE OF FIBRE

INGREDIENTS: WHOLE WHEAT, SUGAR, STRAWBERRY FLAVOURED CRUMCHLETS (SUGAR/GLUCOSE-FRUCTOSE, CORN CEREAL, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, HYDROGENATED VEGETABLE OIL, CITRIC ACID, GLYCERIN, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOUR, COLOUR) NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOUR, GELATIN, SORBITOL, VITAMINS (NIACINAMIDE, THIAMINE HYDROCHLORIDE, FOLIC ACID), MINERALS (IRON, ZINC OXIDE), COLOUR. BHT ADDED TO PACKAGE MATERIAL TO MAINTAIN PRODUCT FRESHNESS. CONTAINS WHEAT INGREDIENTS.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1/2 cup (125 mL)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 70	
Fat 0 g	0 %
Saturated 0 g	0 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 5 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate 17 g	6 %
Fibre 3 g	12 %
Sugars 14 g	
Protein 0 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 4 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 4 %

Reading and understanding food labels

There are three things to look for when you are buying packaged foods:

- 1) **The nutrition claims:** There are two types of nutrition claims. One tells you about the nutrient content of the food, such as “No sugar added.” The other tells you how your diet can affect your health, such as “A diet high in fibre can help reduce cholesterol.”
- 2) **The ingredient list:** This list tells you exactly what is in the food you are about to buy.
- 3) **The nutrition facts table:** In Canada, any packaged food is supposed to list its “Nutrition Facts.” (Canadian Diabetes Association, 2007)

Things to look for on the Nutrition Facts table:

- **Serving size:** Check to see how much food is in one serving.
- **Vitamins, minerals, and fibre:** The more of these that a food has, the better.
- **Calories, sodium, sugar, and fat:** These are things to be cautious around. You don’t want too many calories, sugar, sodium, or fat.

For more information on reading food labels and to learn more about the nutritional content of foods, visit: www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/

Our food, until the mid-1950s, which is about the time our world started to change, was simple and nutritious. Like us, the food was a mixture of old world and new; old world being our kokums, the Cree, Saulteaux, Sioux and other First Nations women of this land, and new world being the European grandfathers who came from France, Scotland, Ireland and England.

~Métis author Maria Campbell, as quoted in *The Métis Cookbook*



Traditional foods and healthier ways to prepare meals

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people across Ontario have unique meals and dishes that they enjoy at home and at ceremonies and feasts. Today, many of us prepare these meals in unhealthy ways.

Some simple tips for increasing the nutritional value of your meals follows.

- Bannock or fry bread:
 - Substitute half (or all) of the white flour with whole-wheat flour
 - Bake the bannock instead of frying it
- Fish and smelts: Bake instead of frying
- Tourtieres:
 - Use meat with less fat by choosing meats that are labelled “lean” or “extra lean.”
 - Or use wild meats, such as venison and moose, which are naturally very lean.
- Make your own canned relish and ketchups—this helps you to control the salt
- Include root vegetables (such as carrots, potatoes, yams, etc.) in your venison stew

Recipe for caribou meatballs

Shared by Heidi Langille from the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre. This recipe makes five dozen (60) mini meat balls.

What you need:

- 1 pound ground caribou
- ¼ pound ground pork
- ¼ cup of oatmeal
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ½ teaspoon red hot pepper sauce

How to make them:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a mixing bowl.
2. Shape the mixture into small balls. Use a teaspoon of meat mixture for each.
3. Cook in a skillet over medium heat in a little hot fat.
4. Turn often until brown on all sides for 5 to 7 minutes.

My mom had a very good stock of caribou meat, birds, arctic char, and mukta ... the bulk of my well-being was based on eating country foods.

~Inuk singer Lucie Idlout

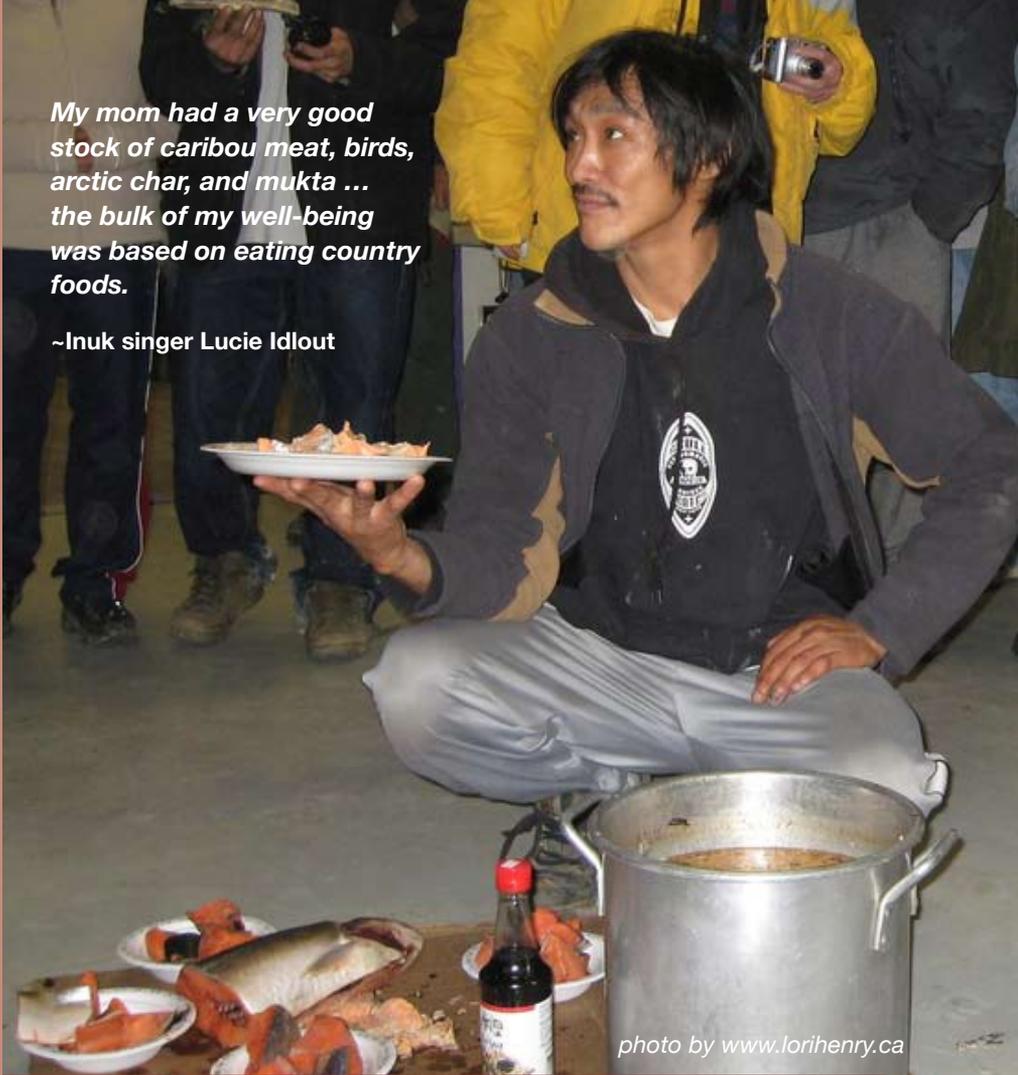


photo by www.lorihenry.ca

Looking for some good traditional recipes?

Order yourself a free copy of the second edition of the *Métis Cookbook*, published by the National Aboriginal Health Organization in 2008. The cookbook provides nutritional information and recipes by Métis people. Métis author Maria Campbell wants young families to use this cookbook to re-create old traditions of sharing good food, stories, and laughter. She says that having traditions creates strong families and a strong people.

Web: www.naho.ca

Email: metiscentre@naho.ca

Phone: 613.237.9462 (Ottawa area) or 1.877.602.4445 (toll free)

Where to access country or traditional foods

We need traditional game and fish to stay healthy. This can be hard if you moved from a remote location to a city. While you can access traditional foods in many Aboriginal programs, here are a few places that sell traditional foods:

- **Bison and elk meat:**
See www.centurygamepark.com.
- **Deer and elk meat:**
See www.ontariodeerelkfarmers.com/venison-outlets.html for a good list of places to get venison in Ontario.
- **Ottawa:** The Elk Ranch sells deer meat at 1271 Old Carp Road in Kanata.
Phone: 613.599.0772
Email: info@elkranch.com
- **Toronto:** Dufferin Grove farmer's market every Thursday from 3 to 7pm, has venison, wild rice, and wild fish from native farmers.
Web: www.dufferinpark.ca

If you're an Inuk in Ottawa, you can access country foods through:

- **The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre** if you have children from ages 0 to 13.
Web: www.ottawainuitchildrens.com
Phone: 613.744.3133.
- **Tungasuvvingat Inuit** has a community feast once a month where they always serve country food.
Web: www.tungasuvvingatinuit.ca
Phone: 613.749.4500, extension 22



We don't let them watch TV. I never grew up that way and she [Jaime] never grew up that way. You're not allowed to watch TV and eat at the same time.

~Métis dad of three, and stepfather to three, Jeffrey Cyr

We don't allow eating anywhere in the house except at the table, except for popcorn... on the odd night in the basement to watch a movie.

~Métis mom of three, and stepmother to three, Jaime Koebel

How to eat healthy and manage your weight

This information is for both adults and children.

If you have young children who are overweight, focus on managing their current weight. By giving them access to healthy food and physical activity, you can help them “grow into” their weight as their height increases.

Do not focus on your child's weight or talk about dieting and losing weight with your children—this can affect their self-esteem and body image for the rest of their life! Instead praise your child for the active things they do and the healthy choices they make. Perhaps most importantly, remember that you're their role model—you need to set good examples for your child to follow.



Tips to help manage your weight as a family include:

- **Get familiar with proper-sized portions:** Portions are often much larger than they need to be. A proper portion of meat or protein for a meal is about the size of a deck of cards. Portions are the same size for children and adults, but children need fewer servings per day to meet their nutrition requirements.
- **Stop eating in front of the TV or computer:** Many studies show that we eat way more than we should when we eat in front of a screen. Sit with your children at a table, and chew your food slowly. It takes your body 20 minutes to get the signal that it is full.
- **Eat more fruit and vegetables:** These foods have a lot of nutrients packed into small portions. These help your body get what it needs while keeping your belly satisfied. To make it easier to eat lots of fruits and veggies, spend an hour washing and chopping up vegetables, and packing them into reusable containers. This way you can grab your snack and eat it quickly, instead of grabbing for something like a bag of chips or a granola bar!
- **Drink more water:** Water is satisfying and has no calories.

In some communities, we are lucky to be able to get free, safe drinking water through our kitchen tap! Many reserves do not have safe drinking water from their taps, so consider yourself lucky if you have free, clean drinking water.

Replace any juice or pop you're drinking with water. If you're not able to do that, try adding water to your cup of juice to reduce the amount of sugar and calories you are getting. It's a start in the right direction!

Introduce a variety of foods, live by example, and be active with our children.

~Sabrina Boucher, healthy eating and active living coordinator at Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Community Health Centre, Thunder Bay

- **Learn to read food labels:** Look at how many ingredients there are in a product. If glucose/ fructose is one of the first ingredients, don't buy it or eat it! If the product has so many words that are big and complicated, this is a red flag. You should be able to know what it is that you're putting into your body. Other things to look for include:
 - How many grams of sugar there are (5 grams = 1 teaspoon)
 - How big a serving size is
 - How many calories a serving has
 - How much sodium is in the product
 - Healthy nutrients such as vitamins and minerals like vitamin C and iron, just to name a few
- **Compare products** you want to buy. See which one has more fibre or vitamin C listed in the Nutrition Facts table. Choose the one that offers more of that nutrient to your body.
- **Reduce "screen" time:** Children and adults are spending more than two hours in front of television or other screens every single day! This is too much. Limit the amount of time you spend in front of a computer or television, and get creative as a family to think about how you'll spend your extra time.

Some quick and cheap ideas for family fun:

- Go for a walk together –making it a family ritual to go for a walk every night after your evening meal
- Play ball games
- Play board games
- Play hide and seek
- Go on outdoor adventures to gather supplies for nature-type crafts
- Enjoy water play with your young child by setting up a water "table" using a wagon or big plastic container filled with water and an assortment of cups and things for playing with
- Join your local gym or community centre to access indoor play spaces and fitness classes (ask about a subsidized or free membership)
- Make yourself an obstacle course using pillows and furniture; etc.

For more inspiration, see our Have a Ball website at www.haveaballtogether.ca.

Children carry such powerful medicine into the family that the children are really the change agents of the family. It's not the parents, it's the children.

~Mohawk teacher Diane Longboat, Six Nations



How to shop on a budget for healthier foods

It's hard to buy healthy food when you're on a budget. This is especially true for people in the north, or in more remote areas, where fresh vegetables and fruits can be hard to come by.

If you're on a tight budget and you want your money to go as far as possible, stock up on some of the staples from the following food groups:

Vegetables and fruits

- Frozen peas and carrots
- Fresh potatoes, carrots, onions, apples, and pears – try buying fresh produce when it is in season, it tends to be more affordable
- Onions, garlic, and ginger—these three root vegetables are cheap and add lots of flavour to cooking. Keep them on hand so if you're low on supplies for a main dish, you can add these to help bring some life to your meal.

Other things to try:

- Start a garden in your yard, community, or on your balcony in containers. Ask a local grandparent or an Elder about gardening if you need guidance.
- Learn how to can, freeze, and preserve the food you grow.

- Pick your own produce. A large variety of fruits and veggies grow throughout Ontario, such as berries, peas, corn, and apples, just to name a few.
- Gather these foods in harvest season.
- Preserve them to use throughout the year. For example, freeze a few baskets of strawberries. Use them for shakes, pancakes, or add to yogurt all year round.

Grains

- Brown rice
- A big bag of oatmeal—you can make healthy breakfast with this, but you can also use it to create patties for veggie burgers, bake oatmeal muffins or cookies (use your whole grain flour with this), cook it with some apples and cinnamon for a healthy snack, etc.
- A big bag of whole grain flour (such as brown flour, rye, etc.)
- A big bag of whole wheat pasta—stock up when they're on sale
- Buy several loaves of bread when it's on sale and freeze it

Milk and alternatives

- When buying cheese, buy a large block instead of a small one (you can freeze it)
- Buy large containers of plain yogurt instead of the individual containers. Be sure to check the expiry date. Buy the ones with the latest date.

- Skim milk powder is a bit cheaper than fresh milk. Once mixed it's great for using in recipes that call for milk.

Meat and alternatives

- Try dried beans instead of meat. Learn about soaking methods for the different types of beans.
- Buy a cheap but lean (less fat) cut of meat. Cook it in a slow cooker to get the most flavour.
- Buy chicken or other bones to make soup bases and stews.

Another idea:

- Think about any hunters or fishers you know in your community.
- Set up some kind of trade with hunters or fishers—ask about trading some of your skills, such as baking or beading, for some of the meat.

There is a website where you can look for the flyer specials for seven Ontario supermarket chains:

- Food Basics
- Foodland
- Loblaws
- Metro
- No Frills
- Price Chopper
- Sobeys

Go to www.soscuisine.com, select the Ontario region, and go see the table under “Save Money.”

Did you know?

This is an ulu, a knife traditionally used by Inuit women.



How to find or organize a farmer's market

Farmer's markets are a great place to get healthy, fresh food. Markets vary in price, but the food always tastes fresh and full of nutrients. Some markets sell food that costs more than a grocery store, but in some places markets are often better value for your money. This is because the food is coming directly to you from the farm, so there is no middle store that is going to increase prices.

Try going to the market near closing time as farmers may want to sell whatever they have left, and will probably give you a good deal.

You might also get to know your favourite farmer and get the chance to ask about gardening practices—this is becoming important to many people these days.

If you'd like to find a farmer's market in Ontario, check out <http://buyfromthefarm.ca>. You can enter "Ontario" into a search engine on the page to find the long list of farmer's markets across Ontario.

Organizing a farmer's market requires a lot of community effort, collaboration, and money. Roadblocks can be incredible! If you're interested in starting a market, talk to lots of people and different organizations in your area so you can all put your energy into it to make it happen.

Other options for helping people get access to healthy food include community kitchens, community gardens, or a food co-op or buying club.







The most important thing I was taught was from a midwife... she said when you are pregnant, take care of your past traumas and learn how to deal with your fears. Eat well when you are pregnant. This helps with a better birth process and also healthier generations of our children.

~Aboriginal midwife Ellen Blais

Healthy eating during pregnancy

Did you know that what you eat during your pregnancy affects the health of your baby? If you are pregnant, there are important guidelines you need to follow around what types of foods to be eating. These guidelines are especially important if you have weight issues or if you have diabetes.

Did you know?

Aboriginal women are at higher risk of developing gestational diabetes than the general Canadian population. This is a type of diabetes that you can only get when you are pregnant. It is often seen as a “warning” sign of developing diabetes later in life. Gestational diabetes can affect your health and the health of your unborn baby.

If you are pregnant or think that you might be, it’s really important that you get care from a professional service provider as soon as possible. You can see a:

- community health representative;
- doctor;
- midwife;
- registered dietitian; and/or
- registered nurse.

A service provider helps you make sure that you are eating the right foods and getting good physical activity to help your baby grow strong and healthy.

You need to take a prenatal vitamin every day when you are pregnant, but this is something to discuss with your service provider. Your service provider should give you information on healthy eating during pregnancy, as well as programs you can access to help you have a healthy pregnancy, such as the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program.

Ask your service provider to prescribe prenatal vitamins to you. If you are a registered Inuit or Status Indian, you may be able to have prescription vitamins covered by Health Canada’s non-insured health benefits program.

Free programs to try for the whole family

As a parent, you know your child the best. You are their first and most important teacher. If you'd like to try to connect with other Aboriginal families who are going through similar experiences as you, why not try using some of the following services and programs?

We have a full list of programs and contact information on our website at www.letsbehealthy.ca. If you're not able to get onto the Internet, ask your service provider to download a list of programs and contact information for you.

- **Aboriginal Health Access**

Centres are similar to community health centres and are across the province. They offer culturally appropriate primary care to Aboriginal people. They offer a variety of programs and for many Aboriginal people, they are important because they help us to access teachings from Elders and traditional healers.

Web: www.ahwsontario.ca/programs/hac.html

Phone: 416.326.6905

- **Aboriginal Peer Nutrition Program at the City of Toronto's Public Health Unit:**

This program provides free nutrition education and support. It has three Aboriginal support sites, providing culturally appropriate nutrition education; community support; consultations on issues such as food security; and referrals for appropriate health services.

Web: www.toronto.ca/health/peernutrition/index.htm

Phone: 416.338.8395

- **EatRight Ontario** is a free service you can call or email to get advice from a registered dietitian. This is a good service for Aboriginal people as they provide service in many of our native languages, including Inuktitut. The dietitians have a wide range of resources to share with you.

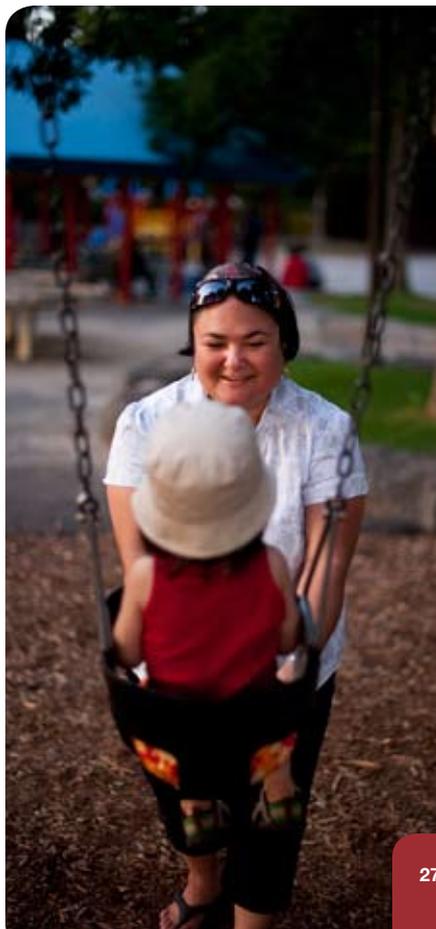
Web: www.eatrightontario.ca

Phone: 1.877.510.510. 2 (toll free)

- **Friendship centres** usually have excellent programs for all Aboriginal people in the area. You may find these to be the best resource in helping you to connect with your community, and to find out what programs are available for your family.
- Web:** www.ofifc.org/ofifchome/page/OfficeList.htm to find details for the centres
- Phone:** 416.956.7575 (Toronto area) or 1.800.772.9291 (toll free).

- **Métis Nation of Ontario** has information about Métis culture, programs, and services. For more information on its services and program sites throughout Ontario:
Web: www.metisnation.org
Phone: 1.800.263.4889 or 613.798.1488
- **Public health units** coordinate health services across Ontario. These units can help you connect to services for your family in your area, including the mainstream Healthy Babies Healthy Children Programs.
Web: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_dt.html
Phone: 1.866.532.3161 (from 8:30am to 5pm)
- **Telehealth Ontario** is a free, confidential telephone service you can call to get health advice or general health information from a registered nurse. The nurse can assess your symptoms and help you decide your best first step. Telehealth can help you decide whether to care for yourself, make an appointment with your doctor, go to a clinic, contact a community service, or go to a hospital emergency room.
Web: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/telehealth/
Phone: 1.866.797.0000
TTY line: 1.866.797.0007

- **Urban Aboriginal Strategy** has various projects across Ontario meant to improve the health of Aboriginal people living in urban centres. Many of the projects may be beneficial to you and your family, although it takes time and dedication to find out what is available.
Web: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/ofii/uas/prj/index-eng.asp
Phone: 1.800.567.9604 (this is the general inquiries desk at Indian Affairs)



A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a grey and white plaid button-down shirt, holding a baby. The baby is wearing a light pink long-sleeved shirt and a red sleeve. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background is a textured blue wall. The text is overlaid in the upper right corner.

Children are a gift... they're so close to the Creator.

**~Métis professor Dr.
Lynn Lavallée, Ryerson
University**

3 Feeding your baby

(Newborn to 2 years old)

This chapter covers:

- Why breastfeeding is so healthy
- Introducing foods to your baby
- Get your child involved in cooking
- Free programs to try

Why breastfeeding is so healthy

One way to help your child be healthy from the start is by choosing to breastfeed your child. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other experts recommend that babies don't need anything besides breast milk for their first six months of life.

After six months you can start to introduce other foods, while continuing to breastfeed. The WHO suggests breastfeeding your baby for up to 2 years or longer.

Note: Breastfed babies should receive 400 IU of vitamin D every day until food provides enough vitamin D or until 1 year of age.

There are many benefits to breastfeeding your baby. These include:

- Helping your child to maintain and achieve a healthy body weight
- Helping your baby avoid early onset diabetes
- Giving you benefits, such as a lowered risk of cancer and an easier time of losing the weight you gained during pregnancy
- Making your child's immune system stronger and more able to fight off infections—some people call breast milk a child's natural vaccine
- Helping baby learn how to understand their feeding cues

Breastfeeding can also help you save money. Formula and baby bottles are expensive. If you live in a community with unsafe drinking water, you'll also have to buy filtered water to mix with baby's formula.

Facts: Water safety and your baby

Drinking or eating contaminated water can make your baby sick. Make sure you find out if your water supply is safe before you use tap water to:

- prepare formula
- mix with cereals or other baby foods
- give in a cup for your baby to drink
- use it to cook your baby's food

Contact your local public health unit to ask if your water is safe. The quality of the water supply can change from time to time. Parents living on reserves should call public health and/or the Band council on a regular basis for up-to-date water safety information.

If the local water supply is safe and uncontaminated, you should still boil water for 2 minutes and then cool it to 70°C, before giving it to your baby with food, as a drink, or in formula..

Contact your local public health unit or health care provider for information on how to prepare formula for your baby.

If the local water supply is NOT safe, do not use it for your baby. Boiling contaminated water does not make it safe for your baby.

If water supplied on the reserve is not safe, you can:

1. Use ready-to-feed formula (this does not require dilution with water)
2. Use bottled water instead of unsafe tap water*
3. Use well water that has been tested and determined to be safe to drink

*When using bottled water, make sure that you **never** use mineral or carbonated water with baby formula or cereal. If you have questions about this, call EatRight Ontario toll free at **1.877.510.510.2**.

I don't feel I can breastfeed, so what should I do?

Some women cannot breastfeed, but this is rare. Some women choose not to breastfeed, and there are different reasons for this decision. Get lots of information and support by contacting your health care provider and by talking with other women in your community (including midwives, grandmothers, and Elders) who know about breastfeeding. Learn as much as you can about breastfeeding before you give birth.

Introducing foods to your baby

Once your baby is approaching 6 months, she'll begin showing the signs of being ready for solids:

- Holds own head up
- Can sit up with help
- Likes to put things in her mouth

Once she reaches this stage, you can introduce iron-rich foods, such as:

- iron-fortified cereal; and
- meat and alternatives.

How do I avoid allergic reactions?

Today it's common for young children to develop allergies to foods, although most children outgrow food sensitivities by age four. It's important to follow guidelines when it comes to introducing solid foods to your baby. This section gives you a brief overview of some things to consider when introducing solid foods.

Use the chart on page 34 to help you introduce foods safely to your baby. Introduce one new food at a time, waiting for 3 to 5 days before trying a new food. Waiting for several days helps you see whether your baby has a reaction to the food you are introducing.

You may not know if your child has allergies, but the following list outlines common symptoms of allergies:

- Itchy or swollen eyes
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Skin rashes, flushed face, or red itchy skin
- Trouble breathing, speaking, or swallowing
- Stomach pain, cramps, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Appearing anxious, weak, "faint," or looking pale
- Shock or complete collapse (anaphylactic shock)

Anaphylaxis is a rare condition characterized by:

- Mouth or throat swelling
- Difficulty breathing
- Collapse and shock





Should I worry about allergies?

About 2 percent of Canadians have a life-threatening allergy. This number is growing, especially among children. Some allergic reactions to food products can be very harmful, even causing death.

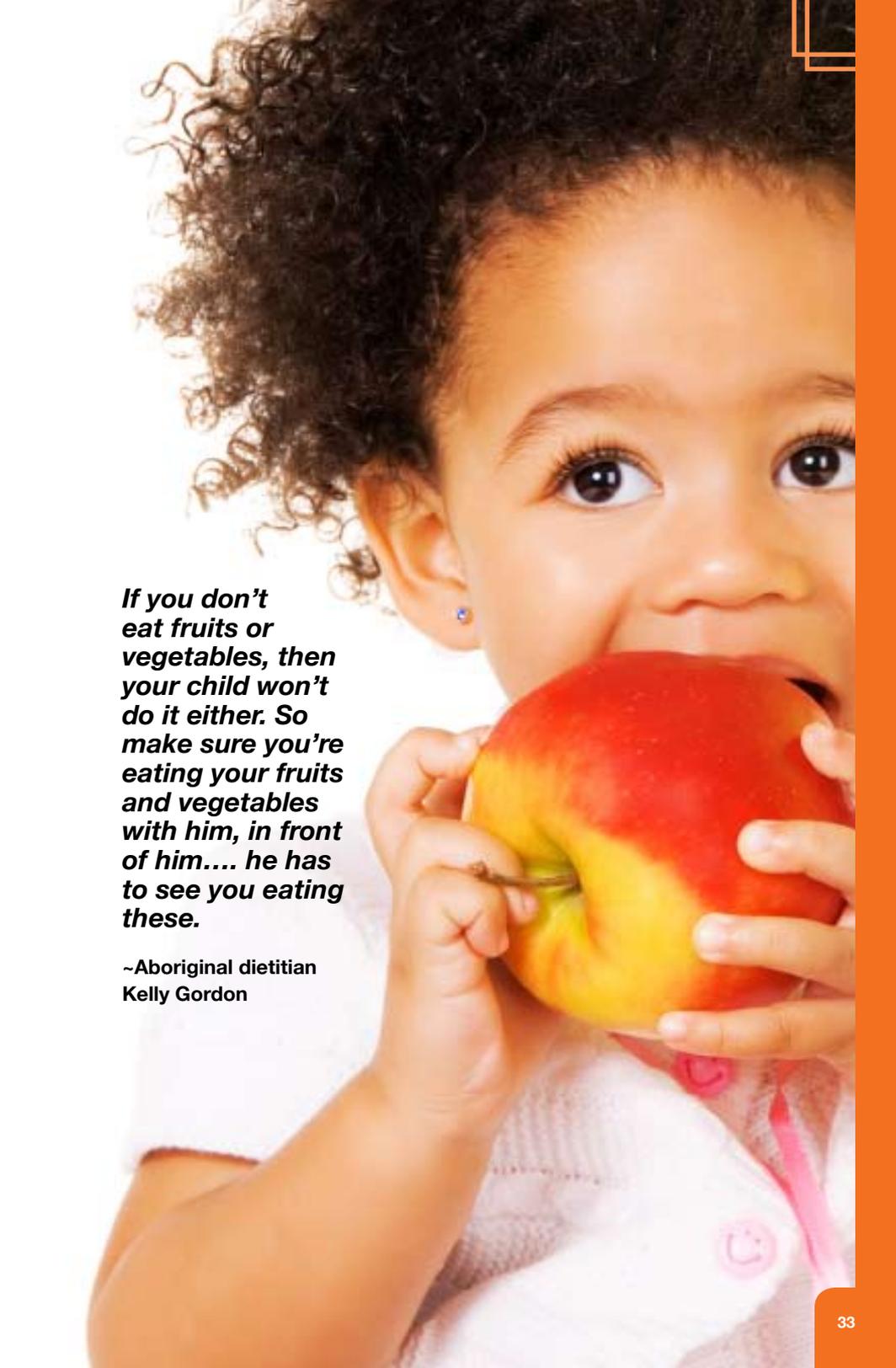
If you think your child has an allergy, see a service provider as soon as possible. You can have tests done on your child, and your service provider can then help you plan a diet for your child.

What's the difference between an allergy and a food intolerance?

- **A food allergy** is how your body's immune system responds to a food protein that your body considers it foreign.
- **An intolerance** (such as lactose intolerance) is a reaction to a food that results in symptoms such as stomach cramping, skin rash, or diarrhea, similar symptoms to an allergy. This is not caused by a reaction of the body's immune system. Babies under 2 years of age are not usually lactose intolerant.

For more information, try calling or visiting:

- Anaphylaxis Canada: www.anaphylaxis.ca
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency: www.inspection.gc.ca
- EatRight Ontario: 1.877.510.510.2 (toll free)
- Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network: www.foodallergy.org
- Health Canada: www.hc-sc.gc.ca
- TeleHealth Ontario: 1.866.797.0000

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera while holding a large red and yellow apple to their mouth. The child is wearing a white top with a pink smiley face on the pocket. The background is plain white.

If you don't eat fruits or vegetables, then your child won't do it either. So make sure you're eating your fruits and vegetables with him, in front of him.... he has to see you eating these.

**~Aboriginal dietitian
Kelly Gordon**

Guidelines for introducing solid foods to your baby

Food	From 6 to 9 months	From 9 to 12 months
Iron-fortified infant cereal	<p>When your baby is 6 months old, you can start to introduce solid foods. Continue to breastfeed on demand. He still gets most of his nutrients from breastfeeding. If you are giving your baby formula, continue to give him formula on demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At about 6 months start to introduce iron-fortified baby cereal. • Start with 2 to 3 teaspoons. • Progress to 2 to 4 tablespoons twice daily. • Start with rice or barley. • When possible, mix with breastmilk. <p>Note: Make sure to feed from a spoon, not from the bottle.</p>	Continue with iron-fortified baby cereal.
Other grain products	Introduce other grain products like toast or unsalted crackers.	<p>Introduce 8 to 10 tablespoons a day of other plain cereals such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bread, • rice, and • pasta
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer pureed cooked vegetables, one coloured yellow, green, and orange. • Progress to soft mashed cooked vegetables, 4 to 6 tablespoons a day 	Offer 6 to 10 tablespoons a day of a variety of mashed or diced cooked vegetables.

Food	From 6 to 9 months	From 9 to 12 months
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer 6 to 7 tablespoons a day of pureed, cooked fruits or very ripe mashed fruits like banana or avocado. • Avoid fruit juice. • Offer water and whole fruits instead. • If you do offer fruit juice, use a cup instead of a bottle. Juice in a bottle can cause tooth decay. 	Offer 7 to 10 tablespoons a day of soft fresh fruits. They need to be peeled, have any seeds removed, and diced.
Meats and Alternatives	<p>Offer 1 to 3 tablespoons a day of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pureed cooked meat; • fish; • chicken; • tofu; • mashed beans; • lentils; or • egg. 	<p>Offer 3 to 4 tablespoons a day of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diced or minced cooked meat; • fish; • chicken; • tofu; • beans; • lentils; or • egg.
Milk and Alternatives	<p>Offer 1 to 2 tablespoons a day of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plain, full fat yogurt; • cottage cheese; or • grated hard cheese. 	<p>Continue with 2 to 4 tablespoons a day of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plain full fat yogurt; • cottage cheese; or • other cheeses. <p>Around 9 to 12 months, introduce (homo) cow's milk, progress from a bottle to a cup.</p>
Other advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid added sugar, honey, and salt. • Offer water in a cup or bottle once you've begun introducing solid foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid added sugar, honey, and salt. • Offer water in a cup once you've introduced solid foods.

For more advice on introducing foods to your baby, see the publication called *Feeding Your Baby from Six Months to One Year* by the Best Start Resource Centre. It's available online at:

http://beststart.org/resources/nutrition/pdf/feeding_baby_rev09.pdf

Get your child involved in cooking

In getting children to eat healthier, two important things include role modelling and involving them in the preparing of meals. Involving young children in preparing meals is easy once you know how to do it. The following list gives you some tips on doing this. Remember to give your child plenty of praise, encouragement, and positive feedback!

My grandson has sat on a high stool at a kitchen counter since he was a year old watching the preparation of food. We really want him to understand that, that this is how we make a sandwich; this is how you can make a sandwich. This is how we prepare the vegetables. He really enjoys it. He watches it. When it's time to prepare foods he goes and he gets his stool and he climbs up and he watches it. That's really good. Getting them involved in healthy nutrition early.

~Swampy Cree Elder Joanne Dallaire

There is a lot of stuff that the health centre and other community programs do, I am hopeful that all these little changes that we encourage will be for the better in the long run.

~Melanie Francis, Healthy Babies Healthy Children program worker, M'Chigeeng Health Centre

1 to 2 years

- Get your child a big bowl of water that she can use for washing vegetables and fruits—children love playing in water.
- Give your child a clean towel to dry off the produce.
- Get your child to set the table (you may only want them to set cutlery, napkins, and re-usable plastic cups at this age, depending on how much you trust them with glass).
- While closely supervising your toddler, get your child to help push the button on things like blenders and food processors.
- Bring your child grocery shopping with you. Point out all the different colours of fruits and vegetables.
- Tell them about how you are trying a wide variety of colours to help get all the nutrition their body needs.
- If your child knows his colours, ask him to help pick out some red fruit, some green fruit, some orange fruit, and so on.

Free programs to try for newborn babies and young toddlers

- **Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program** targets pregnant women who may be at risk of nutritional problems during their pregnancy and during the first six months after the baby is born, through on- and off-reserve community projects. These include community kitchens, community gardens, nutrition classes, food buying clubs, support, education, referral, and counselling to pregnant women at risk.

Web: www.kanen.on.ca

Phone: 613.952.8377

(for on-reserve programs)

or 807.344.9006 (for off-reserve programs)

- **Healthy Babies Healthy Children Programs** improve the long-term health prospects of children aged 0 to 6 years. The program includes pre- and post-natal screening and assessment, home visiting, service co-ordination, and support for service integration.

Web: www.ahwsontario.ca/programs/ahbhc/contacts.php

Phone: 1.866.532.3161 (from 8:30am to 5pm)

- **Public health units** coordinate health services across Ontario. These units can help you connect to services for your family in your area, including the mainstream Healthy Babies Healthy Children Programs.

Web: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_dt.html

Phone: 1.866.532.3161 (from 8:30am to 5pm)



It's our responsibility as parents to raise our children to be completely self-sufficient.

~Swampy Cree Elder Joanne Dallaire



4 Feeding your child

(Ages 2 to 6 years)

This chapter has information on:

- How much food a child should eat
- Making healthier lunches and snacks
- Teaching your child to help you make healthy meals
- Free programs to try

Parents and children are both responsible for healthy eating.

Dietitian Elynn Satter (see www.ellynsatter.com) says:

- You are responsible for what your child is given to eat. You also decide where and when to feed your child.
- Your child is responsible for how much and even whether he eats.

It's okay for children to choose not to eat a meal. It's also okay if your child eats very little in a day. Your child has good ideas about when she is hungry—you need to trust this.

Every child has good and bad days. Children eat less when they are not feeling good or when they are sick. Do not pressure your child to eat. Make sure they have plenty of physical activity. If the situation is lasting... check with your service provider.

How much food a child should eat

Ask yourself:

Do the young children (ages 2 to 3) in my family get:

- 4 servings of vegetables and fruit every day?
- 3 servings of grain products every day?
- 2 servings of milk and alternatives every day?
- 1 servings of meat and alternatives every day?

Do the children (ages 4 to 13) in my family get:

- 5 to 6 servings of vegetables and fruit every day?
- 4 to 6 servings of grain products every day?
- 2 to 4 servings of milk and alternatives every day?
- 1 to 2 servings of meat and alternatives every day?

If you answer “no” to most of these questions, ask your service providers to connect you with a dietitian or other service providers that can help you with healthy eating.

You can also call **EatRight Ontario** five days a week to speak to a registered dietitian at no charge. The toll-free number is 1.877.510.510.2.

Tips for making healthier lunches and snacks

It can be challenging to think of healthy snack and lunch ideas when you're a busy mom or dad who needs to throw something together quickly. Get organized and try to make the snacks and lunch the night before, so you're not too rushed in the morning. It also helps to sit down on the weekend and try to do some meal planning. This is where you figure out the ingredients you'll need for the week in order to prepare every meal.

My husband looks at all the flyers, he finds out where all the sales are and he goes to those stores and he buys what is on sale. We buy in bulk and we buy stuff that will last. So we often go to a butcher's and get a freezer full of meat that we know is going to last 3 months. This takes a lot of time and planning but it's worth it!

~Inuk mother Heidi Langille

To help you feel more excited about snacks and lunches, “treat” yourself to a good set of reusable containers. You can buy plastic or glass containers from a wide variety of stores, such as dollar and large department stores.

Ideas for healthy lunches and snacks include:

- **Cut fruit:** Children generally love fruit so keep plenty of different kinds on hand. Cut up pieces of apple, grapes, banana, strawberries, kiwi, and so on. If packing an orange or grapefruit, peel and divide these fruits into smaller pieces to make them easier to eat for your small child. Make it a challenge to learn about what fruits are in season and grow near by. Try to add more of these to your diet. For example, in the fall eat more apples, in the summer eat more berries. Buying fruits in season is a better choice for your budget.
- **Yogurt with cereal:** Many children also love yogurt. Make this an economical choice by buying a large tub of yogurt. Try to choose plain yogurt because it has less additives. Add your own fruits such as bananas, strawberries, or blueberries. Look for yogurt that does not use artificial sweeteners like aspartame. Children need fat in their diets, so purchase dairy products that are full fat, not the fat-free or reduced-fat products. To increase the nutritional value you can mix in granola, nuts, or whole grain cereals.

- **Sandwich “rolls:”** Use whole wheat tortillas or use a rolling pin to flatten a piece of whole wheat bread to make it perfect for rolling. Experiment with a variety of fillings for these rolls, such as light tuna and apple slices with a bit of mayonnaise; grated cheddar cheese with sliced cucumber; hummus with a bit of baby spinach and tomato; or almond butter with honey. Make it a challenge to see how many of the four food groups your child can include in their roll!

Tip: When preparing sandwiches, use a variety of bread products that contain different seeds and nuts in them, and complex grains (look for products that say “whole grain,” “flax seed,” etc.).

Having reusable containers helps you to cut down your expenses as you won’t need to buy re-sealable bags, plastic wrap, or tinfoil. In the long run, using these containers also helps Mother Earth! If you can’t afford containers, put them on your wish list for anyone who buys you gifts. In the meantime, use the plastic containers that come with sour cream and yogurt. Don’t use plastic containers in the microwave to reheat foods because harmful chemicals can be released into the food. You can also use the glass jars that come with jams, artichokes, salsa, etc.

- **Hummus or other bean dip with crackers:** This is a tasty way of helping your child get some protein, veggies, and grains all in one meal/snack. Using beans in the place of meat for protein helps your wallet, as they’re much cheaper than meat. They’re also easy to store safely in the cupboard.

Recipe: To make hummus, use a food processor to blend together a can of chickpeas with a fresh cloves of garlic, a tablespoon of olive oil, a tablespoon of plain yogurt or a sesame seed paste called tahini (if you have it), the juice from a freshly squeezed lemon, and a variety of spices like cumin, chilli spice, and salt and pepper to taste. You can also add water to get the desired thickness of the spread. Increase the nutrition content by roasting some red or orange peppers, removing their skins, and adding these into the mixture.



My mom basically used a lot of different strategies with me. She didn't want me to eat too much junk food, and she helped me monitor that... for breakfast she had system where it was like, "No, no you have to have whole grain shredded wheat" and I could put a couple sprinkles of fruit loops on top. And wouldn't you know? That's what I eat now, shredded wheat and skim milk, so it kind of worked.

~Ojibwe student Michael Auksi

- **Homemade soup or chili:**

Send a hot meal to school with your child by investing in a thermos that will keep your child's food hot.

- **Pasta salad:** Try cooking whole-wheat pasta, bet your kids won't taste the difference! Use a dressing that is oil-based (canola or olive oil are the best choices), not mayonnaise-based. Mayonnaise goes bad quickly so an oil base is better for a lunch that isn't being kept in the fridge.
- **Juice boxes:** These are great if they're 100% juice with no sugar added. Be sure to read the ingredient list to make sure there is no sugar on the list. Often sugar is called "glucose-fructose" on ingredient lists. This means the same thing, just in fancier words. Put them in the freezer and take them out in the morning or the night before. Put them into the lunch bag to help keep everything else cool and from spoiling. Use an insulated lunch bag or reusable freezer pack.

- **Leftovers** from supper the night before!

Lunch and snack products to avoid:

- Juice and other drinks with added sugar, including soda pops
- Processed cheese products with crackers
- Little pre-packaged snack packs that have processed meats in them
- Chips and chocolate bars
- Pudding cups
- Granola bars that are full of unhealthy ingredients (again, look for ingredients that are hard to read) may also contain nuts. Most schools are nut-free these days.



Fast fact: The importance of water

Many of us give our children juice because we think it might be “healthy” for them. It’s better to give our children water. A recent study (see Wang 2009) found that giving children water instead of sweet drinks is a good strategy to help avoid childhood obesity. This is why many parents now fight to remove vending machines from public schools.

If you want to give your child juice, make sure it is 100% juice and limit his intake to about half a cup (125 to 175ml) per day. Giving your child some fruit will help him get more nutrients. Invest in a stainless steel water bottle for your child to carry in his backpack. Having his own water bottle helps him get easy access to water whenever you are not around.

It's good to praise a child because it makes a child feel good about themselves. It gives them self-confidence. They see themselves as being important.

~Innu Elder Elizabeth Penashue, as quoted from *In the Words of Elders*



Teaching your child to help you make healthy meals

In getting children to eat healthier, two important things include role modelling and involving them in the preparing of meals. Involving your children in preparing meals is easy once you know how to do it.

The following lists give you some tips on doing this. Remember to give your child plenty of praise, encouragement, and positive feedback.



Children in those days helped as soon as they were old enough to help. When I was old enough as a little girl my mother encouraged me to work, cleaning beaver and other animals. My mother would perform and the children would sit around and watch, so they could learn.

*~Innu Elder Elizabeth Penashue, as quoted from *In the Words of Elders**

For all ages, make cooking more fun by investing in kitchen utensils that your children will enjoy using, like a wooden spoon for mixing that has some kind of cool design or nice colour on it. Buy these

as unique gifts for your child's birthday. Having this will help them feel proud, and give them a sense of ownership, when they are helping you in the kitchen.

Some ways of getting children at different ages involved in cooking include:

2 to 3 years

- Get your child to dry lettuce in a salad spinner or with a clean dish towel.
- Continue to let your child wash produce in the kitchen sink.
- Pre-measure ingredients for your child into small bowls and mixing cups, and then let them add everything together for something like muffins or bread.
- Let your child line a muffin tin with muffin cups.
- Get your child to use the food processor to make hummus, under your supervision.

3 to 6 years

- Your child is developing more abilities and awareness at this age. Take your child to the grocery store. Tell her it's her "job" to pick out red, orange, green, and yellow fruits and vegetables. Be sure to help her recognize these colours, and praise her for doing a good job when she picks out the fruits and veggies.
- Give your child a recipe book with pictures inside of it—ask him to flip through and pick out a recipe he would like to try and make with you. Make this a tradition—it's something you can do once a week, or twice a month. Soon your child will be asking you to help him make his favourite recipes on a regular basis!
- Get your child to help you organize any parties you are throwing. Ask her what type of item she would like to eat. Get her to help you make it. Similarly, get her to help you make a potluck dish for any dinners you're attending. She will be so proud to tell everyone that she helped cook the meal!
- Ask your child to help you grow a garden. In the winter or spring, shop for seeds for your garden. Get your child to help you plant the seeds indoors, before the snow melts.

Tungasuvvingat Inuit has seasonal outings, like in the fall it's apple picking, and I'd say over 150 people show up for that and it's families, kids of all ages. We play fun games and do all kinds of good stuff.

~Inuk mother Heidi Langille,
coordinator of school-age
programs at the Ottawa Inuit
Children's Centre

- Get your child to water your seeds and remind them to take an interest in them.
- Get your child to help you plant the seedlings in your garden (or outdoor containers) once the warm weather arrives. Continue to nurture your child's involvement in the gardening process.
- Get your child to make a smoothie. She can cut up bananas using a dull butter knife (or can break them up with clean hands). Pre-measure all the ingredients for her, and then let her throw everything into the blender. Watch her blend it up.
- Ask your child to help set and clear the table after dinner. Remember, children have better self-esteem when they feel that they have a job within their family unit.
- Plan outings to any local berry patches or forests where you can safely gather produce. This might mean picking strawberries, apples, corn, etc. Children love to be outdoors to see how their food grows!

When children make their own food they say, "It's good, it's good," even if it looks disgusting. Get them involved in helping to gather and obtain food.

~Aboriginal dietitian
Kelly Gordon



Free programs to try for children ages 2 to 6

As a parent, you know your child the best. You are their first and most important teacher. If you'd like to try to connect with other Aboriginal families who are going through similar experiences as you, why not try using some of the following services and programs?

We have a full list of programs and contact information on our website at www.letsbehealthy.ca. If you're not able to get onto the Internet, ask your service provider to download a list of programs and contact information for you.

- **Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities** is an early intervention program for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and their families living in urban centres and large northern communities. It is a pre-school program that prepares young Aboriginal children for school by meeting their spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs.

Web: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/programs-mes/ahs_main-eng.php

Phone: 416.973.0003 (general inquiries)

- **Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve** is an early intervention program for First Nations children (age 0 to 6) living on reserve, and their families. It prepares children for their school years by meeting their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs.

Web: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa_intro-eng.php

Phone: 613.946.9744 (ask for your regional Head Start representative)

- **Brighter Futures** funds First Nations communities to develop and manage programs targeting the physical, mental, and social well-being of children.

Web: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/mental/brighter_grandir-eng.php

Phone: 613.952.0114





- **Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)** targets off-reserve Aboriginal children up to six years of age. It has community-based programs that improve the body, mind, emotions, and spiritual well-being of children and their families. CAPC targets prenatal issues, baby and child nutrition, parenting skills, cultural development and retention, and community development and healing. There are 58 off-reserve CAPC projects.

Web: www.kanen.on.ca or try the directory for projects at <http://capc-pace.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

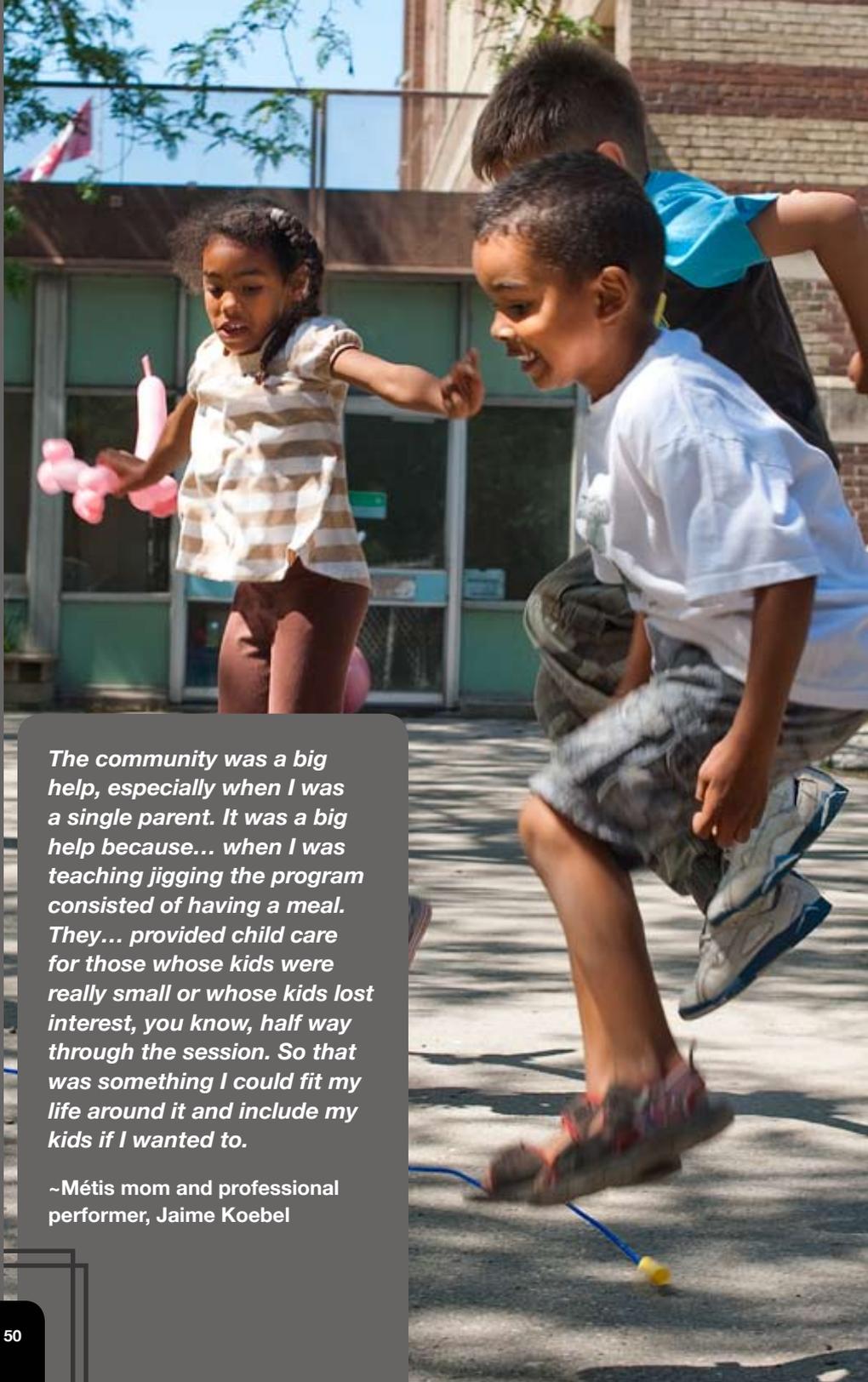
Phone: 807.344.9006 or 1.800.361.0563 (toll free)

- **Ontario Early Years Centres** are for children up to six years of age. Many of them provide drop-in programming. Find a centre near you.

Web: www.ontario.ca/earlyyears

Phone: 1.866.532.3161 (from 8:30am to 5pm)





The community was a big help, especially when I was a single parent. It was a big help because... when I was teaching jiggig the program consisted of having a meal. They... provided child care for those whose kids were really small or whose kids lost interest, you know, half way through the session. So that was something I could fit my life around it and include my kids if I wanted to.

~Métis mom and professional performer, Jaime Koebel

References

A wide range of traditional teachings were gathered from our key informants and advisory members for this project. You can find their names listed on the inside cover of this book.

Best Start Resource Centre and Nutrition Resource Centre. *Feeding Your Baby From Six Months to One Year*. Toronto: 2009. Accessed online April 12, 2010. Available at: http://beststart.org/resources/nutrition/pdf/feeding_baby_rev09.pdf

Bradshaw, Brenda and Cheryl Mutch. *The Good Food Book for Families*. Toronto: 2008.

Canadian Diabetes Association and Dietitians of Canada. *Look at the Label: Nutrition Information on Food Labels*. 2007. Accessed online April 12, 2010. Available at: www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/pdf/ENG_BW_FactSheet.pdf.

Health Canada. *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: First Nations, Inuit and Métis*. Accessed online April 12, 2010. Available at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/fnihb-dgspni/pdf/pubs/fnim-pnim/2007_fnim-pnim_food-guide-aliment-eng.pdf

Kalnins, Daina and Joanne Saab. *Better Baby Food*. 2nd Edition. 2008.

Kulchyski, Peter; McCaskill, Don; and David Newhouse (eds). *In the Words of Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

Métis Centre. *The Métis Cookbook*. Second edition. Ottawa: National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2009.

Wabitsch, M. *Preventing Obesity in Young Children*. University of Ulm, Germany. Published online February 9, 2006. Accessed online April 12, 2010. Available at: www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/child-obesity/according-to-experts.html

Wang, Y. Claire et al. "Impact of Change in Sweetened Caloric Beverage Consumption on Energy Intake Among Children and Adolescents." *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 163 (4). April 2009. 336-343. Accessed online April 20, 2010. Available at: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/163/4/336>



**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO**