

Pointers For Parents

Get Color Smart—Eat a Rainbow of Color!

(NAPSA)—How do you snap your kids out of the junk food mode? It's easier than you think.

When you introduce a vibrant mix of red, yellow, orange, green and blue fruits and vegetables you're already off to a great start!

Here's why: Colors like the red in watermelon make food visually appealing! And it's the ideal way to introduce kids to healthy food, especially when you're trying to encourage a finicky or hesitant eater. More importantly, these colors offer you and your kids food packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and disease-fighting plant chemicals called phytochemicals.

National Watermelon Promotion Board nutritional expert, Dr. Barbara Levine, R.D., Ph.D., offers these tips on transitioning kids to healthier lifestyles. She is also the co-director of the nutritional program at Rockefeller University, New York, and the director of nutrition in medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

- The dinner table is the perfect place for quality time with kids. Making eating a positive social experience is essential! Eating alone often leads to overeating.

- Be sure to praise kids when they try something new and nutri-



tious. If you want them to sample a new food, it's best to catch them when they're the most hungry.

- Have fun with food! Serve nutritious snacks with a bit of flair and encourage kids to participate. For example: Watermelon slices are a sweet snack, but watermelon balls are definitely kid-sized fun treats! Fruit never was this much fun.

- Food labels are a must-read so teach kids to read them! Labels give you insight into total calories per serving. They also reference the number of calories attributed to fat. Additionally, you'll be able to identify different types of fat as well as vitamins, minerals, cholesterol, fiber and sodium.

- Exercising together is a fun way to reinforce that physical

activity is a good thing! Whether you go on a walk, shoot hoops together or splash in the pool, you'll be encouraging your kids to get active.

- Go easy on salty and processed foods. Eat them in moderation and avoid adding salt to recipes. Teach kids to locate salt (sodium) on the list of ingredients featured on a food label.

- Fill your shopping cart with color! When you're at the produce section of the supermarket or a farmer's market, ask kids to find fruits and veggies in each of the five essential colors. Rally them to locate red fruits and vegetables and ask them why they're so exceptional.

- Don't limit yourself to fruit as a dessert. Add a watermelon garnish to your plate or enjoy as a refreshing side dish.

- Serve fruit in bite-size portions for easy access snacking!

- Create an amazing fruit smoothie by using brightly colored fruits such as berries, watermelon and bananas.

- Encourage kids to become lunch chefs! Ask them to suggest healthy lunches and help them with the preparation.

For more nutritional information on watermelon, visit www.watermelon.org.