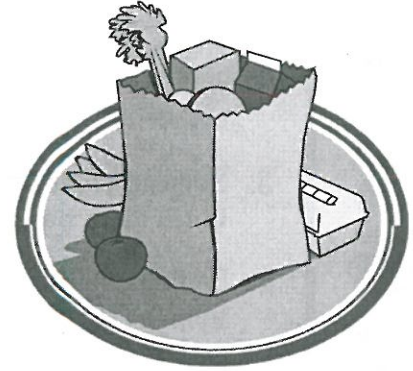


12 Ways to Create a Healthful Eating Style

- 1. Forget the fads:** Diet fads come and go without offering a permanent solution. When you hear about the latest diet, always ask yourself: Can I eat this way for the rest of my life?
- 2. Be realistic:** Any eating plan needs to work for your family and your situation. It needs to fit with your schedule, your food budget and your cooking skills.
- 3. Make a commitment:** Write down some important reasons for changing your eating habits. Share a written or verbal promise to make healthy food choices with your friends or family.
- 4. Start slow:** Making drastic changes can be a recipe for failure. Small changes can make a big difference, if they last. Pick one change, like eating breakfast, and make it a habit.
- 5. Be consistent:** The human body responds well to consistency. For example, if you decide to want to start eating breakfast, have at least a small breakfast every day.
- 6. Stick with it:** Research suggests that it takes about 21 days for a behavior to become habit. If you want to start eating breakfast, plan ahead what you will eat in the morning.
- 7. Be flexible:** Life is full of surprises, and sometimes plans need to change. If you have to leave early and don't have time for breakfast at home, pack something to take with you.
- 8. Be creative:** Make a list of all the possible foods – like all the breakfast options that you enjoy at home, in the car, on the bus or at work.
- 9. Have items on hand:** Once you have a list of possible foods, keep them around at home, at work, or anywhere you might eat breakfast.
- 10. Plan ahead:** Plan ahead of time to have healthy foods available so that you don't have to eat whatever is handy when you get hungry.
- 11. Forgive yourself:** Healthy eating does not have to be perfect eating. If you make a mistake or miss a few days of healthy eating, no problem. Just get back on track as soon as possible.
- 12. Congratulate yourself:** Changing your eating habits can be tough. Just think how long you've had your current habits. Give yourself a pat on the back for any healthy changes.



National Nutrition Month® - March 2005

Adapted by the NC NET Program from Eat Right Montana materials