



## Hot tips for parents, whanāu and communities

Children and young people need healthy food for their bodies and brains to work properly. Here are some tips to get them into healthy habits.

- Keep a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit on hand for snacks.
- Encourage children to drink water throughout the day. Service it in a jug with ice. You could add slices of orange, strawberry, kiwifruit or lemon.
- Hooked on sweet drinks? Wean children off gradually by making water the only option at breakfast, then add lunch, then dinner. Soon they'll be drinking water with meals all the time.
- Eat in season – seasonal vegetables and fruit are the cheapest, freshest and tastiest.
- Avoid regularly offering food or drink as a treat or reward (see our ideas for alternative rewards).
- Get active together – it's a great way to have some fun and build your relationship.
- Avoid calling food 'good' or 'bad' – instead try talking about food we eat 'everyday' and food we only eat 'sometimes'.
- A treat is not a treat if it happens every day! Keep treat foods for special occasions like parties. If treats have become a habit, try swapping to healthier options - chocolate biscuits with plain fruit biscuits, potato chips with plain popcorn, fruit juice with a whole piece of fruit, ice cream with yoghurt, chocolate bars with dried fruit or nuts.
- 'Lighten up' - use reduced fat versions of mayonnaise, coconut cream, cream cheese, minced beef and milk (for children over two).
- Try foods from a range of different countries and cultures for new flavours, colours, textures and aromas.
- Offer children a variety of healthy foods – different types, colours, textures, flavours, smells and temperatures – so they get all the nutrients they need.
- Introduce wholegrain bread by making it the only option for toast or by making sandwiches with one wholegrain slice and one white.
- Get more vegetables and fruit into their diet – fruit smoothies, carrot sticks before dinner, savoury/fruit muffins, grated vegetables in mince/bolognaise/homemade hamburgers.



## Special tips for families and whānāu

- Eat together as a family as often as possible.
- Cook a meal with your children at least once a week – you'll be surprised what they can do, and their future flatmates will thank you!
- If you have time, eat breakfast with your children – it sets everyone up for the day.
- Combat after school hunger with an extra sandwich or piece of fruit in their lunchbox. And when collecting your children from their ECE service or school, take some fruit with you.

