



## ARTICLE

# Inculcating healthy eating habits in kids by reducing sugar intake

**We know your child loves sweets, find out how to manage the sweet tooth while reducing sugar intake**

**3 mins read**

Have you noticed the kind of foods that your child is naturally drawn towards? If you have, you know that a variety of candies, soft drinks, cakes, and juices make the list. And they all have one thing in common, added sugar. Science tells us that children are naturally drawn towards sweet food items. It also tells us that excessive consumption of added sugars can lead to unhealthy weight gain, obesity and long-term health disorders like Type 2 diabetes and hypertension. It's a challenge to inculcate healthy eating habits in kids.

Knowing this, how do you go about giving appropriate nutrition to your child to build the right foundation? Worry not! Here are 5 practical ways you can manage the sugar intake of your child:

### **1. Eat healthy as a family:**

You are a role model for your child. Children learn healthy eating habits by observing and following their parents. You can choose to stock the fridge with nutritious food options. Choose to stock whole fruits over packed fruit juices, as a whole fruit provides fiber, which a packed juice won't. Go with fruits like watermelon, banana, and apple which are high on natural sugar. Your kid will love them! You can also serve the fruits in innovative ways, freeze cut in an ice tray or make fruit popsicles with fruit puree and milk. Fruits and yogurt salad are a good snacking option too.

### **2. Limit consumption of Biscuits/Cookies:**

Prepare healthy snacks for kids at home with whole wheat instead of the packaged cookies from the market. Make sure that you read the labels on packaged food and look out for the added sugar.

### **3. Carry packed food:**

Pack your child's favorite homemade snacks whenever you are planning to travel with your child. Choose healthy meals for kids like vegetable and cheese sandwiches, homemade muffins, mixed-nuts or dates. You can also add a twist to homemade healthy meals and make them easy to eat on the go. Make cheese paratha rolls or uttapam sprinkled with oregano.



#### **4. Don't add sugar to milk:**

Adding sugar or sugar-laden health mix to the milk reduces its nutritional value. Choose a health drink fortified with necessary nutrients for your child's growth. Remember to go for options that don't have any added sugar. You can instead choose to add natural sugars like jaggery, honey, and date paste. You would not be able to completely eliminate sugar from your child's diet. A sweet treat here and a birthday cake there are acceptable. However, following these tips will help you manage the sugar intake and make your child's diet more nutritious every single day!