

It's How You Eat and Move Your Feet

Each and every one of us is bombarded with a variety of choices everyday ranging from all aspects of life but our most important choices involve our dietary habits and physical activity. We can choose whether or not to eat healthy or unhealthy and to exercise or not exercise. Our family and school are two very important aspects of our life as they teach us and prepare us for the future and this should include educating us about nutrition and physical activity. So, how can you lead your family and school to make lasting nutrition and physical activity improvements? You can do this by being aware of nutrition, being physically active, and by combining both nutrition and physical activity.

First, you need to gain an understanding of nutrition. All foods are in a sense good for you but it is the amount of each type of food that you need to be careful about so try to eat more healthy foods than unhealthy foods. You can encourage your school to serve more nutritious meals for lunch by suggesting they set up a grill station, have fresh fruits and vegetables, and to promote healthy eating. Eating fast food is common with families since it is quick and cheap. Getting fast food is fine as long as you know how to eat the right things there, so instead of eating a burger with fries and a soda, try to encourage your family to eat a grilled chicken sandwich with baked chips and milk or water. Also, eat as many meals together as you can and participate in the cooking process so that you can learn how to cook healthy. Eating healthy doesn't have to be boring so be creative with your nutrition and have fun.

Second, you need physical activity to live healthy. Most health organizations call for about sixty minutes of physical activity each day and this can be playing sports,

biking, hiking, walking, swimming and more. You can talk to your school about promoting a 5,280 steps plan where students are encouraged to walk 5,280 steps, or 1 mile, per day and to make class time more interactive so that students are moving around rather than sitting down. For your family, you can promote physical activity by encouraging your family to take walks together and play together.

The most important way to make improvements is by combining both nutrition and physical activity and understanding their relationship. Food gives you energy for physical activity and after the physical activity you eat again for more energy. An analogy of this is the relationship between a car and gas because a car, or you, needs gas, or food, to give it the energy it needs to work and by choosing high grade gas, or healthy food, over low grade gas, or unhealthy food, the car works more efficiently. When your car burns off the gas, it needs to be refueled with the good gas just as your body needs to be refueled after physical activity with healthy food. You can promote this understanding of food and physical activity by teaching it to your school. Try to be the leader in your family when it comes to nutrition and physical activity so that your family gets the right combination of both.

Creating long lasting nutrition and physical activity improvements in your school and family may require some changes, but those changes don't have to be big ones; little things or changes can go a long way. Try to set goals for your family and school to start eating more nutritiously and to participate in some form of physical activity. Remember that variety is the spice of life, so have fun with a variety of foods and physical activities to make healthy living enjoyable. The next time you are faced with choosing between a burger or salad and a family walk or watching television, what will you choose?