

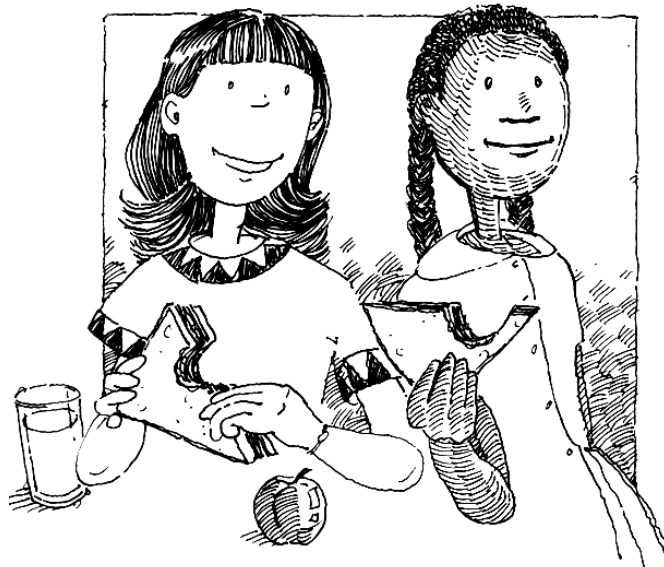
## Help Me Be a Healthy Eater

**M**ealtime is a struggle for me. When I was a baby, you used to feed me whenever I wanted. Now, you're asking me to eat what you want me to eat on your schedule. But if I throw a fit, you give me whatever I want. I'm confused!

Besides that, *eating can be frustrating!* I can't control my hands very well, I spill things, and I have trouble managing my spoon. It's going to take me a while to get the hang of all this.

### What I Want You to Know

I learn to be a healthy eater when you provide pleasant mealtime experiences, teach me to enjoy a



variety of healthy foods, and help me set limits on eating.

As I grow older, I start paying more attention to what I'm being fed. Some of that stuff looks pretty weird! Being pushy won't make me want to eat a certain food.

When I'm having a growth spurt I may eat more than usual. Other times I may eat less. My appetite will guide how much I eat. Your wise and loving guidance will help shape my eating habits for the rest of my life.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

I may not notice when I'm hungry and my stomach is small. That's why it's good for me to *have regular meal and snack times*. If we have breakfast at 7:30, I may need a healthy snack, like a banana with peanut butter, by 10:00. If I have lunch at noon, I will need another healthy snack, like string cheese and apple slices, by 3:00.

*Planning ahead will make mealtimes easier* for you and me. If you ask me what I want to eat, I may choose foods that are not good for me. Instead, *let me choose from the healthy foods*

you've provided. You may have to offer me a new food several times before I'll try it. I appreciate your encouragement when I try something new.

*I learn healthy eating habits from watching you*. If I see you enjoying healthy foods, I will enjoy them too. Buy foods that aren't high in sugar, salt or artificial colors and flavors. That way, I'll learn to enjoy a nice ripe strawberry or a juicy tomato from Grandma's garden.

If I know I can get the juice or food I want whenever I ask for it, it will keep me from trying other foods at meal time. If I ask for something other than what's on the menu, *don't give in*. I need limits on what and when I eat.

Helping me make healthy choices now will set me on a path of good health.