



**Carol Ann  
Brannon** MS, RD, LD  
Your Nutrition Navigator

Carol Ann Brannon, MS, RD, LD  
Nutrition Therapist, Food Coach, Author, Speaker  
Telephone: 404-409-1747  
Fax: 404-601-6018

Office:  
10475 Medlock Bridge Road  
Ivy Falls Office Complex - Suite 205  
Johns Creek GA 30097

---

## Healthy Eating Guidelines

By Carol Ann Brannon, MS, RD, LD

### 1. Take Responsibility:

Parents are the nutritional gatekeepers for their child or children. Parents have responsibility for:

- **What** a child eats: Primarily whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean meats, low-fat or skim dairy foods, healthy fats and beverages
- **Where** a child eats: Establish designated places where eating is allowed
- **When** a child eats: Establish time guidelines for when meals and snacks will be served and eaten; adhere to these guidelines!

### 2. Be Accepting of your child's responsibilities, which include:

- How Much to Eat
- Whether to Eat or NOT to Eat
- Must Eat from the Foods Offered: serve a favorite food with a "new" food; begin with only a bite of a "new" food only

### 3. Be a Positive Role-Model:

Research shows it may take 12 to 15 exposures before a child will accept a new food. If your child refuses to eat a particular food, offer it in a different way. For example, if your child does not like cooked carrots; try raw carrots with Ranch dip. Enhance recipes; for example, add fat-free refried beans to spaghetti sauce or taco meat, try adding shredded zucchini or carrots to muffins.

#### **4. Be a Positive Role-Model:**

Set a good example for your children; let them see you eating and enjoying healthy foods and trying new foods. Sit down with your family to eat; make family meal a priority.

#### **5. Eat without Distractions:**

Eat without distractions like the TV; limit TV watching to 2 hours or less per day. Children with sensory issues can be overwhelmed with the smell of food, the diversity of textures, and the loud sounds from the TV can intensify their stress.

#### **6. Mind Your Portions:**

Pay attention to portion sizes; never eat right out of a bag or box, rather portion out an appropriate serving. Do not allow “grazing;” toddlers and preschool portions are about 1 Tbsp per year of age, but begin with 1 teaspoon of “less favorite” foods and gradually increase to 1 tablespoon.

#### **7. Be Respectful**

Respect your child’s eating quirks or wishes within reason. For example respect that your child likes his/her sandwich cut diagonally or that they eat one food at a time, etc.

#### **8. Make Food Preparation a Family Affair:**

Involve your child or children in menu planning and preparation. It’s important to expose picky eaters to a variety of foods. Allow children to wash, handle, and even play with foods! Children that help prepare a dish are more likely to try the new food.

#### **9. Have Fun and Remain Calm:**

Avoid engaging in bribes or battles over food; invite, rather than command, your child to try a new food. Encourage your child to “explore” the new food; never force feed a child. Again, be persistent and do not give up.

#### **10. Be Purposeful/Intentional:**

Keep the atmosphere light and happy; avoid confrontational family discussions; share something good or funny that happened during their day.