

# Eating Healthy. Growing Strong.

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the American Academy of Pediatrics have joined with the best-selling children's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, to help families learn about healthy eating habits.



# Healthy Eating at Home Matters!

**The Very Hungry Caterpillar eats many foods on his journey to becoming a butterfly. You can help your child on his or her own journey to grow up healthy and strong.**

## 4 Tips to Grow Healthy and Strong

### I. Eat Fruits and Vegetables at Every Meal

Fruits and vegetables add important vitamins and fiber to your diet. At every meal, include some kind of fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables. Just be sure to watch out for those with fatty sauces or added sugar. Aim for at least 5 fruits and veggies a day. Remember to avoid small, hard foods on which your child can choke, and cut any firm, round foods (e.g., raw carrots or grapes) into long, thin slices.

Ideas for adding fruits and veggies to your meals:

- Add fruits and veggies to foods your child already likes: put blueberries in pancakes, chopped fruit on cereal, or small pieces of broccoli in macaroni and cheese.
- Make it fun: try cutting up food into fun shapes or making faces out of fruits and vegetables.
- Prepare and pack fruits and veggies as snacks for after-school, after sports practice, and other times.





## **2. Give Kids a Say In What They Eat and Get Them Excited About Healthy Food**

Help your kids make the right food choices from an early age. You can do this by giving them two healthy choices to choose from, like an apple and an orange. It's a great way for your kids to get excited about eating healthy foods. Let them decide what and how much to eat.

Ideas to help children get excited about food:

- Let them help you with small, kid-safe jobs in the kitchen such as mixing ingredients and setting the table.
- Allow them to smell, touch, taste, and play with food.

## **3. Eat Breakfast Every Day**

Eating breakfast helps your child start his day in a healthy way. Incorporate fruit and whole grains whenever possible. Children and adults who eat breakfast daily are less likely to be overweight.

## **4. Eat Together As a Family**

Try to set aside your meals as family time, and eat together as often as possible. Even babies can join family meal time. By age 9 months, they are able to eat on the same schedule with you. Create family meal times when they are little and keep this tradition as they grow.

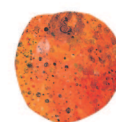
**For more information about healthy nutrition for your child, visit:**

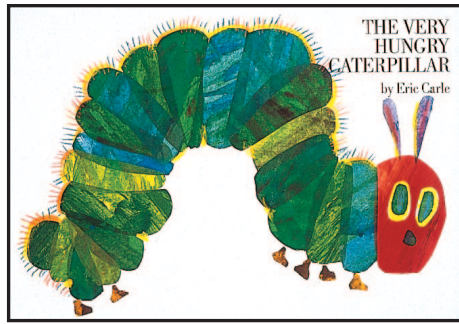
**The Academy's website at**

**[www.healthychildren.org/veryhungrycaterpillar](http://www.healthychildren.org/veryhungrycaterpillar)**

**The Alliance's website at**

**[www.healthiergeneration.org/veryhungrycaterpillar](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/veryhungrycaterpillar)**





# A Guide to Reading With Your Child

**Start talking, singing, and reading with your child from the beginning. He will learn that reading is a fun activity you share together.**

- Point to words as you read them, showing your child that the print carries the story.
- Ask your child to name things she sees in the pictures. Talk about how the pictures relate to the story.
- Reading doesn't have to be a huge project. Even a three-minute story every night before bedtime will help your child learn.

## **Discuss Healthy Active Living using *The Very Hungry Caterpillar***

- Teach your child that apples, pears, plums, strawberries, and oranges are all fruits. Ask him if he can name other fruits.
- Talk to her about how fruits are good for the body.
- Talk about how when the caterpillar overeats, he gets a stomachache—so it is important to stop eating when you feel full.
- Talk about how some foods are “sometimes” foods—like cake and ice cream—and how it is not a good idea to eat them all the time.
- After reading the page where the caterpillar eats the green leaf and feels better, talk to your child about how you too eat green leaves (lettuce, spinach, cabbage, etc.) and how it is good for your body.
- Teach your child that it is important to eat healthy foods, so he can grow up healthy and active like a butterfly.

**Find out more about *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and author and illustrator Eric Carle at [www.eric-carle.com](http://www.eric-carle.com) and [www.penguin.com/ericcarle](http://www.penguin.com/ericcarle)**

This guide was developed in collaboration with



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