

TV & healthy eating don't mix

Your TV could be changing your eating habits — and not for the better. You may not realize that this common device can change what you put on your plate.



CHANGE OUR EATING HABITS?

Two reasons TV and screens can interfere with a healthy diet:

- When we watch TV, we see commercials. Many commercials advertise unhealthy, processed or high-sugar foods. Kids and adults alike can be influenced by these commercials. They can make you crave or purchase foods you would not normally eat.
- When you watch TV or another screen while eating, you might not realize how much you're eating. TV takes your mind off your food so you don't taste, smell or experience it as much. It makes food less satisfying and you can lose track of how much you are eating.



HOW TO START BETTER HABITS

You can avoid getting into a “TV trap” with your eating habits. Here's how:

- Don't watch TV while eating. Agree as a family not to use electronic devices during meals or snacks.
- Keep healthy snacks handy. Replace chips and crackers with crunchy vegetables. Or if you crave sweets, try fresh fruit instead of cookies.
- Keep yourself busy while watching TV. Try using therapy dough or other sensory activities during TV time. This may help you get out of the habit of using your hands to reach for snack foods.
- Try to eat together as a family regularly.
- Minimize commercials. Watch shows on platforms that have no commercials. Or skip through commercials if you can.
- Learn about healthy foods as a family. Try growing a garden or visiting a farmer's market. When you see an unhealthy food advertised on TV, talk about healthier options.
- Be a good role model. Show your kids that you can sit and enjoy meals and snacks without screens.