

# Support for Healthy Eating

**KEY GOALS**

It's time to build an active network of friends who will support your child in making healthy lifestyle changes. A strong support network can help your child manage diabetes, lose weight, or maintain weight loss.

things. It will help your child keep getting healthier.

You're part of your child's support network. You're the most important part. You love her. You give her support through the things you say. You give her support by making home a healthy place to be. You give her support by showing how you are trying to live healthy.

**Getting support will help your child meet 4 key goals:**

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold Family Meetings
- ⊙ Keep Track of Weight

**PARENTS ASK:**

**Why is support from friends so important right now?**

You and your child are meeting with your PAL less often. So your child needs to do more on her own. So will you. This makes support even more important. Having strong support will help your child keep doing the right

But you can't always be there for her. She spends many hours away from you. She spends a lot of time with friends. Sometimes they can offer the support that you can't. They

can because they're there. But they must be ready to.

Getting support from family and friends helps your child meet her **4 key goals**. Why? Because it's a lot easier to do the right thing if the people you spend time with are behind you. And it's a lot harder if they aren't behind you.

Friends are so powerful. Friends spend time together. They talk about feelings. They talk about their thoughts and values. They listen to one another. They do things together. They have fun together. They encourage one another when times are tough.



**Here's what you'll learn about in this module:**

- ▶ Helping your child identify friends who will support healthy lifestyle changes
- ▶ Helping your child learn to ask for support
- ▶ What to say when a friend says, "No."



Friends are so powerful. It's a lot easier to succeed when friends back you up.

Even when they aren't so helpful, friends are still powerful. Sometimes friends argue. Or talk behind your back. Or want to do things you don't want to do, like eating RED foods.

That's why your child needs friends who will support her healthy eating.

### How can I help my son build a support network?

PARENTS ASK:

Make sure he understands why it's so important to have a support network. He won't see his PAL as often. He'll have your support. But he'll still have to make more decisions on his own.

Then help him find family and friends to ask for support. He can start by listing the friends he eats with. He should include people he eats with at school, after school, and on weekends. Then think about who could give him the most support for healthy eating. They may be friends who like to eat healthy themselves. Or they may be people who care a lot about him. They care so much they are willing to do whatever it takes to support him.

Tell your child to write down two ways he could make a healthy change in eating habits with each of his friends. He should be specific. That way a friend knows what your child really wants. For example, he could:

- ▶ Ask Jose for a healthy snack when at his house.
- ▶ Ask Jose to eat a healthy lunch with him at school.

Then you can help your child figure out which friends to ask first. Who does he eat with most often? Who are his really close friends? Who wants to eat healthy? Who wants to lose weight? Try to help him pick two or three who are most likely to help.

Then help your child make a plan to ask. When is a good time to ask each friend? What will he say first? How will he explain why he wants help?

### What else can I do to help? I don't think my daughter is comfortable asking for help.

PARENTS ASK:

What a great question! Many kids don't like asking for help. Nor do many adults. It seems like a weakness. Or they may be embarrassed. One thing you can do is to talk to your child about this. Ask her how she feels. Let her know that lots of people have a hard time asking for help. Be sure you encourage her. Let her know that you believe she can.

You can also help by practicing with her. Pretend you are one of her friends. Tell her to ask for the help she wants from this friend. Practicing like this can be a big help, especially for someone who feels shy about asking. Practice with her until she is clear. She needs to know what she wants to say. Practice until she feels sure of herself.

She could start by telling her friend about her eating goals. She should make it clear how support would be important. How weight control helps take care of diabetes. Make sure she is specific about the help she wants. Tell her to ask about the times her friend could help. The place. What she should do. Every detail helps.

Do this several times. Be different friends. Pretend to be in different moods. Talk about it after each time you practice. What does she think she said well? What would she like to change? Would she like to do it again?

Be sure that sometimes you act like a friend who will say, "No." Your child needs to practice dealing with that as well.

A support network gets built one friend at a time. One step at a time.

Alicia's mother noticed that she was not her normal cheerful self. She asked about it. Alicia told her what had happened.

Alicia had been excited about making a support network. Having a group of friends to support her sounded great. She made a list of people she spent time eating with. At the top of the list she put the people she thought could help her most. She wrote down how they could help her.

Alicia and Theresa often went to a fast-food restaurant after school. Alicia asked Theresa if she would like to walk instead. "That way," she said, "we can still talk. But we can get some physical activity at the same time."

"I don't like walking," Theresa said. "And I like going to the restaurant. It's a good place to see friends after school. Anyway, I want a snack. Why don't you just come with me?"

"I can't," said Alicia. She was hurt. She was discouraged. But she remembered what to do. "Thanks for listening. I just can't go. It'd be too hard not to eat RED foods if I did."

"I know I'm not supposed to feel discouraged," she told her mother. "But I am. I didn't even ask her about eating healthy lunches at school. I don't feel like asking anyone else."

Her mother gave Alicia a hug and said she understood. She reminded Alicia that Theresa had a lot going on in her own life. "Helping you be healthy may not be so important to her right now. Maybe at some other time," her mother said. "But you can't let that stop you. Why don't we look at your list of friends? You can pick another friend to talk to. I'll help you practice."

Alicia felt a little better. She knew her mother was right. It's normal for friends to see some things differently.

She showed her list to her mother. Alicia and her mother did some practicing. "This really helped," Alicia said. "I'm really clear about how I can talk to some of my friends."

The next day she talked to Marie. Marie said she would be happy to eat healthy lunches with her at school. She would also like to walk and talk sometimes. That made Alicia feel great!

What do you like about what Alicia's mother did?

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What will you do when a friend says, "No," to your child?

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A good network doesn't need to be huge. Even a few friends can give strong support.

**PARENTS ASK:**

### What should I do if a friend says, "No"?

Prepare for it. Practice for it with your child. Talk about it in advance. Getting turned down just happens. It's normal. People have different interests. So we shouldn't take it personally. Your child has other friends to ask. That's why you made the list.

Go over the *Tips for when a friend says, "No,"* with your child.

Remind your child of how normal it is when it happens. Ask how your child felt. Listen to his feelings. Then reassure your child. Give hugs if they're needed.

Encourage your child to move on. Work down the list. Practice some more with your child. Make sure he feels confident again. Knowing what he is going to say will help.

### How to help your child

Encourage your child to:

- ▶ Limit RED foods.
- ▶ Get more GREEN activity.
- ▶ Talk to friends who can be supportive.
- ▶ Get back on track when a friend says, "No."

## Tips for when a friend says, “No.”

Go over these tips with your child:

- ▶ Don't get upset. Don't take it personally.
- ▶ Ask your friend to explain. It may be something that could be fixed, like a schedule or transportation.
- ▶ Thank your friend for listening to you.
- ▶ Come tell us, your parents, what happened. Tell us how you feel.
- ▶ Practice for the next person.
- ▶ Believe in yourself.
- ▶ Get started again.
- ▶ Remember, you don't need a lot of friends in your network. You only need a few who will really back you up.

## How to help yourself

- ▶ Limit your RED foods.
- ▶ Get GREEN activity.
- ▶ Build your own support network for healthy eating behaviors. See if you can find just one good friend to support you.

## How many friends should my child ask? How large should a support network be?

PARENTS ASK

- ▶ The long-term goal is to have a network strong enough so that your child can get support every day of the week. But he doesn't need a lot of friends in a network to do that.
- ▶ A short-term goal should be to talk to 1 or 2 friends over the next 2 weeks. That should get your child started. You build a support network one friend at a time. Your child doesn't need a lot of friends in his network.
- ▶ A good network doesn't need to be huge. Even a few friends can give strong support. What's important is that they really want to help. That's more important than their number. Of course, your child's got to spend enough time around them to get support.
- ▶ Make sure you are on the list. Ask your child what other ways you can give support for healthy eating.

Prepare your child. Help your child practice for when a friend says, “No.”



# Support for Healthy Eating

Your child is trying to find friends to support healthy eating. Your child will be talking to you about this at a family meeting. Use this chart to get prepared. Fill it out as well as you can. You can ask your child about what you don't know later.

List people your child often eats with. Mark what meals they eat together. Mark if the person is a healthy eater, a close friend or likely to help if asked. Make any other notes that might be helpful. Talk about this chart at a Family Meeting.

Name	Meals			Possibility of Giving Support			
	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	Healthy Eater	Close Friend	Willing To Help	Other
Samantha	X	X		No	X	X	Usually helpful

## Build Support for Healthy Eating

**Step #1:** Write down the names of people who could give you the most support for eating healthy. These may be people who eat healthy themselves. They may be people who really care about helping you lose weight and be healthy.

Name	Name	Name

**Step #2:** In the space below pick 3 people who could give you support for healthy eating, and list two ways you can do healthier eating with this person. Be as specific as you can. This will help you ask for their support.

**Step #3:** Make a plan to approach these people. Use the 5 questions to guide you. *When? Where? What? How? What to do if my friend falls through?*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Eating Behavior #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Eating Behavior #2: \_\_\_\_\_

My Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Eating Behavior #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Eating Behavior #2: \_\_\_\_\_

My Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Eating Behavior #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Eating Behavior #2: \_\_\_\_\_

My Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step #4:** Start asking! First approach the most important people for you to ask for help. These are people you spend the most time with and who are most likely to help.

# Support for Healthy Eating

## Your Child's RED Food Goals

Your child has a chart to list RED food goals for each meal of the week. Go over it at a family meeting. It's like the chart below. Be prepared with suggestions for your child. The final goal should be no more than 3 RED foods a day. That will help your child lose weight. You can also lose weight if you limit your RED foods to 3 a day.

## Meet Your RED Food Goals

Use this chart to limit your RED foods.

1. List your RED food goals for each meal.
2. List the healthy foods you plan to eat.
3. List the barriers you face.
4. Write down your plan to deal with these barriers. How can your friends help?

Date:	RED food Goal	Healthy Foods Choices	Barriers	My Plan
Breakfast	0	Cereal and fruit	Overslept and missed breakfast	Pack a piece of fruit and some cereal and ask a friend to remind me not to eat RED foods out of the vending machine
Snack				
Lunch				
Snack				
Dinner				
RED Food Total				

## Meet Your RED Food Goals (Continued)

Date:	RED food Goal	Healthy Foods Choices	Barriers	My Plan
Breakfast				
Snack				
Lunch				
Snack				
Dinner				
RED Food Total				

Date:	RED food Goal	Healthy Foods Choices	Barriers	My Plan
Breakfast				
Snack				
Lunch				
Snack				
Dinner				
RED Food Total				

# Support for Healthy Eating

Getting support from family and friends will help your child meet **4 key goals**. It's a lot easier to do the right thing if the people you spend time with are behind you. And it's a lot harder if they aren't behind you.



## How to help your child build a support network

- ▶ Help your child identify people to be part of his support network. List people he eats with. Help him sort them out.
- ▶ Ask your child: Who could give you the most support for healthy eating?
  - ▶ Who do you eat with most often?
  - ▶ Who likes to eat healthy?
  - ▶ Who cares a lot about you?
- ▶ Help your child write down 2 ways he could make a healthy change with each of these people. Be as specific as possible.
- ▶ Help your child practice asking. Act the part of a friend your child is asking. Go through it several times. Talk about how it goes each time.

## What should I do when a friend says, "No," to my child?

- ▶ Go over the **Tips** in the module about this in advance.
- ▶ Practice for it.
- ▶ Show your support when it happens.
- ▶ Help your child practice again.
- ▶ Encourage your child to move on to ask the next friend.

**SPECIAL FOCUS**

## How many friends should my child ask?

- ▶ A goal should be to talk to 1 or 2 friends over the next 2 weeks. That should get your child started. A support network gets built one friend at a time.
- ▶ Make sure you are on the list. Ask your child how you can give support for healthy eating.

