If you’re a parent of a toddler, you know that getting them to eat a healthy diet is not always easy! Toddlers can be finicky about what they eat as they try to show their independence. Tummy troubles can be a problem too and affect a child’s appetite. Toddlers may not eat enough fruits, veggies and whole grains and this can lead to constipation. The tips below can help your family have a healthier diet and digestive system.

1. **Plan ahead.** Make a weekly menu and shopping list. Get your little ones involved—when they help decide what’s for dinner, they’re more likely to eat what’s served!

2. **Shop smart.** Make produce a priority and fill up the cart with fruits and veggies first. Half your plate should be fruits and veggies—that means that half your cart should be too! Avoid impulse buys by not shopping when you (or your children) are hungry!

3. **Fill in the nutrient gaps.** Research shows that kids don’t get enough potassium, fiber and vitamin E. Fruit, especially dried fruit—is a great source of potassium and fiber, and can make vegetables and whole grains more appealing. Whole grains like whole-wheat pasta, whole grain bread, cereal and crackers, sunflower seed and nut butters and leafy greens help with vitamin E and fiber. Recipe idea: sunsweet.com/recipes/couscous-salad/

4. **Serve up superfoods at snack time.** It’s a great time for veggies and fruit—like steamed carrots or broccoli with dip, a fruit smoothie or yogurt parfait with dried fruit.

5. **Make it fun.** Use dried mangos, prunes, apricots or dates to make silly faces on sandwiches or pancakes. Make shopping fun and educational by playing “I-Spy” in the produce aisle. Or see how fresh plums and dried plums are the same—and different! More ideas here: pinterest.com/sunsweet/kid-creative/

6. **Have them drink their fruits and veggies!** Try a creamy blended soup, smoothie or a glass of PlumSmart™ or Amaz!n™ Prune Juice, which provide potassium and fiber. Juice is an easy way to sneak fruit into the diet, but be choosy and pick one that’s nutrient rich. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that toddlers drink no more than 4-6 oz. each day. Check out a yummy recipe for a PlumSmart ™ raspberry smoothie: sunsweet.com/recipes/breakfast-smoothie/

7. **Keep food safe.** Toddlers are at risk for choking: make sure to chop or avoid hard, round foods and always supervise kids while eating. For more information: choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/food-safety-tips-preschoolers
8. If your toddler can’t chew dried fruit well yet, add to cooked foods like quick breads, pancakes and oatmeal; or soften in yogurt or pudding for a special treat. Recipe idea: sunsweet.com/recipes/pancakes/

9. Pass on the sugar please! You can cut added sugar and add more nutrition to recipes by adding juice, fruit and even vegetables. Other easy ways to cut the sugar include skipping sodas and sweet tea and serving fruit for dessert instead of cookies and candy. Recipe idea: sunsweet.com/recipes/whole-wheat-banana-bread/

10. Limit processed foods. Instead of chicken nuggets, serve Greek yogurt, hummus, bean dip or eggs: they provide just as much protein—and are quick to prepare! Low fat milk and yogurt provide calcium as well as protein.

11. Set a healthy example. You are your child’s most important role model, especially when it comes to making food choices. Try not to make faces when you serve food that’s not your favorite, and talk positively about healthy foods.

12. Be patient! It can be hard when kids love a food one day and refuse it the next—but it’s very normal. Kids may need to try foods 10-15 times before they like them! Keep serving them, but in different ways.

13. Make it easier to eat healthy by saving time: use the crock-pot to make overnight oatmeal, pot roast or black beans. Cook once; eat twice by cooking extra and planning for leftovers.