

[IMAGE]

## Eating 101: How Our Kids Learn

By Editorial Staff

Parents exert tremendous influence over how their children learn, of course, and it applies to eating habits, according to a recent study that examined how the introduction and frequency of fruit and vegetable intake during infancy was associated with intake of the same important foods at age 6. Based on maternal reports of food consumption, "31.9% of 6-year-old children consumed fruit less than once daily and 19.0% consumed vegetables less than once daily." Bad news from a nutritional perspective, particularly since dietary recommendations call for at least five servings of fruit and vegetables daily.

dinner - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark In terms of an association between patterns of eating during infancy and at age 6, the researchers found that "children who consumed fruits and vegetables less than once daily during late infancy had increased odds (more than twice as likely) of eating fruits and vegetables less than once daily at age 6 years."

The take-home is simple here: If you're the parent of an infant and are ready to introduce solid foods (or know someone who is), emphasize fruits, vegetables and other healthy options right away, so it becomes a pattern in later life. Otherwise, you have no one to blame but yourself when your teen wants chips and cola all the time, or begins to suffer the consequences (weight gain, etc.) of an unhealthy diet that doesn't include fruits and vegetables.

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