



# Mealtime Minutes

## Pester Power

**Children between 2 and 11 years of age view over 12 food advertisements daily on television, over 70% of which are for unhealthy food. A recent national survey reported that parents believe that the media has a negative influence on their children's eating habits. This can in turn lead to making grocery shopping a frustrating experience as over half of children's requests for food while grocery shopping are for sweets and snacks. Parents yield to this pestering because they don't know what to do.**

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Have a healthy snack at home before heading to the grocery store.
- Use a soft “no” by reasoning with your child and explaining why the sweet or snack is not a healthy choice.
- Talk to your child before and during grocery shopping about what are healthy foods and why you are buying them.
- Help older children learn to read and understand food labels. Typically, the fewer the ingredients the healthier the item.
- Talk with children about how to evaluate advertising messages.
- Give children a choice between a few healthy options when they are requesting a snack or food purchase.
- Help reduce children's exposure to food advertising by reducing screen time, including access to unhealthy food websites particularly those that feature games and entertainment.

