



Healthy Eating Tips

AVOID FAST FOOD: PLAN TO COOK AT HOME

Fast food, usually includes fried foods and is high in calories, sodium (salt), trans and saturated fats with little nutrition.

- Think fast food is cheaper than healthy food? Think again. Cooking at home is often healthier and costs less.

- *Fast food meals for a family of 4*..... \$22.00

- *Healthy dinner for a family of 4* \$15.81

Chicken (2 lbs.) - \$6.20 for 4

Fresh green beans - \$2.99 for 4

Apple - \$3.52 for 4

Cup skim milk - \$0.75 for 4

Brown rice - \$2.35 for 4

*Prices will vary based on location.

CUT BACK ON SWEETS IN FOOD & DRINKS

Choose sugar-free water! It's calorie-free, refreshing and lower in cost (most tap water is safe and healthy to drink). Avoid soda, energy drinks, sports drinks and waters and milks that are flavored with sugar. Sugar-free water and low-fat (1%) or fat free (skim) milk are the best choices!

Did you know?

- *Drinking just 1 can of soda a day can increase weight by 14½ lbs. in a year.*



- *A 20 fl. oz. sports drink has as much sugar as 8.5 sugar packets.*

CHOOSE FRESH OVER PROCESSED FOODS

The healthiest foods and drinks have the least number of ingredients. Shop around the outside aisles of the grocery store to find these items. These include fresh and frozen vegetables and fruits, lean meats and fish, nuts, low-fat milk and eggs. Convenience processed foods are usually high in salt and unhealthy fats. They also have few vitamins and won't keep you feeling full for long.

GO FOR FRUIT INSTEAD OF JUICE

Choosing whole fruit instead of juice will cut down on sugar and keep you feeling full longer. Frozen fruit is just as healthy as fresh fruit! If using canned fruit, choose fruit in water or 100% juice instead of lite or heavy syrup to cut out any added sugars.

Did you know?

- *Fruit is a healthier choice than juice. It has less sugar and has fiber, which even 100% juice does not.*
- *Juice is not suggested for any child under the age of 1 year.*

PORTIONS PORTIONS PORTIONS!

Use a smaller plate to manage portions. A child's plate should be no more than 7" side to side and a teen's plate, no more than 9" side to side. Young children often need less food than teens or adults. To learn more about your child's specific needs, ask your



pediatrician about meeting with a Registered Dietitian.

Remember, fill ½ of the plate with vegetables and fruit. Grains or starches such as rice, pasta or potatoes should take up only ¼ of the plate and proteins such as meat, chicken, beans or eggs should take up ¼ of the plate.

- *Tip: Use a plate with dividers to easily manage the portion sizes of each food group.*

HEART HEALTH

Cut back on foods high in solid (saturated) fats. These include bacon, sausage, pizza, hot dogs, butter, baked goods (cookies, croissants, muffins, etc.) and fried foods. These unhealthy fats can raise cholesterol levels and increase the risk for heart disease.

- *Tip: Use vegetable based cooking oils such as olive, canola, vegetable, and corn oil instead of butter or lard.*

CHOOSE WHOLE GRAINS

100% whole grain foods contain fiber. Fiber is good for digestion, can help lower cholesterol and keeps us full for longer. Choose brown rice and whole grain crackers, pasta, cereal, bread and tortillas.

- *Tip: Look for 5 grams of dietary fiber or more per serving for a high fiber food.*
- *Tip: Look for the word “whole” as the first word in the ingredient list.*



VEGETABLES AND FRUITS - EAT THE RAINBOW

Half of our plate should be vegetables and fruits at each meal. Mix up the colors of vegetables and fruits to provide different vitamins and natural fiber. Keep prewashed and sliced vegetables and fruits in the fridge for quick, easy snacks for your kids.

- *Tip: Buy veggies and fruits in season. They're cheaper, healthier and tastier!*
- *Frozen veggies and fruits are just as healthy as fresh ones (sometimes more!) and cost less.*
- *Reach for 5 veggies and fruits each day!*



For more healthy eating and lifestyle tips visit:

www.ChooseMyPlate.gov • www.EatRight.org • www.KidsEatRight.org

Connecticut Children's Medical Center - Clinical Nutrition Services

<https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/search-specialties/nutrition/>

860.837.6286

PLAN HEALTHY SNACKS FOR YOUR FAMILY

A snack is a small amount of healthy food to provide energy between meals. This does not mean sweets or “junk food”. For the best snacks choose a vegetable, fruit or whole grain food. You may add a food that has healthy protein to keep hunger away longer.

Examples of healthy snacks:

- *A medium apple or orange, ½ banana or a cup of berries (portion size varies with age)*
- *A serving of whole grain crackers*
- *Carrot sticks, sliced cucumbers, cherry tomatoes or sliced bell peppers*
- *Unsweetened applesauce*
- *You may add one of these healthy foods with protein to one of the snack choices above: peanut butter, hummus, one hardboiled egg, a serving of unsalted nuts, a low-fat cheese stick or a low-fat yogurt.*
- *Tip: Add fresh or frozen fruit to plain low-fat yogurt instead of buying yogurt with fruit already mixed in. These and yogurts with sweet or candy toppings have a lot of added sugar.*

Avoid grazing (constant snacking or picking at foods throughout the day). Instead sit down and eat meals and snacks at set times throughout the day.

- *Tip: Avoid use of electronics (phone, TV, tablet, etc.) while eating! Using these devices while eating often leads to eating faster and more.*

LOOK AND LISTEN FOR CUES

Kids often eat for many reasons besides hunger. They may feel bored, sad, stressed, lonely or eat to go along with screen time. Recognize if your child eats for reasons other than hunger and redirect them. Take a walk, go outside to play, read a book, drink water, do homework, do an art project, do chores, etc.

- *Tip: Offer to do an activity with your child to motivate them!*

BE REALISTIC!

Don't expect your child to never eat sweets or “junk food.” Work to cut back on foods such as chips, cookies, ice cream, cake, etc. to help overall family health. Satisfy a sweet tooth with a piece of fruit and check for portion sizes on the nutrition facts labels of any processed foods.

