

Family Meal Planning

The foods you and your family eat are important for good health. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, healthy fats, and low-fat dairy provide the nutrients that you need for all stages of life. The right balance can help your entire family lead a healthy life.

WHAT SHOULD MEALS LOOK LIKE?

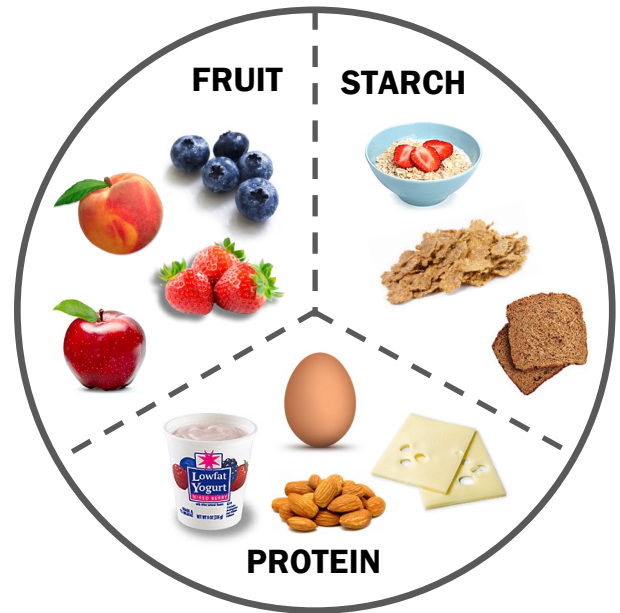
BREAKFAST

Your breakfast plate should be **1/3 protein**, **1/3 fruit**, and **1/3 starch**, ideally whole grains.

For example, you could have:

- **Protein:** 2 eggs, 1 low-fat yogurt, 1 cup low-fat milk, or 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese.
- **Fruit:** 1 apple, 1 cup berries, or 1/2 banana.
- **Starch:** 1-2 slices whole wheat bread, 1 cup whole grain cereal, or 1 cup cooked oatmeal.

Breakfast



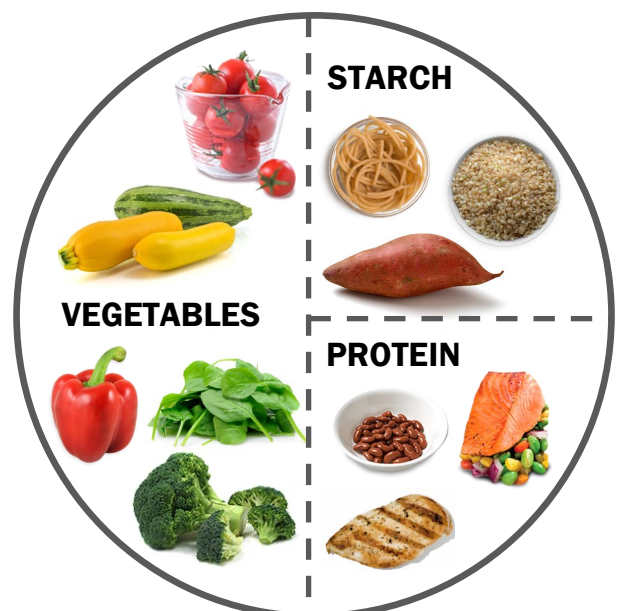
LUNCH/DINNER

Your lunch and dinner should be **1/4 protein**, **1/4 starch**, and **1/2 non-starchy vegetables**.

For example you could have:

- **Protein:** 3-4 oz (size of a deck of cards) of salmon, chicken, or turkey; 1/2 cup beans; 1 cup tofu.
- **Starch:** 1 cup (or the size of your fist) whole wheat pasta or brown rice; 1 medium sweet potato; corn on the cob; 1-2 slices of whole wheat bread.
- **Non-starchy vegetables:** 1-2 cups of lettuce, kale, carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, Brussels sprouts, eggplant, zucchini, or broccoli.

Lunch / Dinner



INCLUDE HEALTHY FATS WITH MEALS

Include 1-2 servings of healthy fats with each meal.

For example, 1-2 tsp olive oil, 12 almonds, or 1/4 avocado.

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ENJOYING FAMILY MEALS

Studies have shown that families that eat together consume more fruits and vegetables and often get more vitamins and minerals, too. Here are some ways get your family together for a meal:

- ♥ Set a regular family meal time each day.
- ♥ Time the meal— don't make it last too long. It won't be fun if the kids get fussy.
- ♥ Turn off the TV, phones, and video games. Make the family dinner feel special.



DRINKS & SNACKS

Juice or sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, juice drinks, or sport drinks, can add more sugar and calories than your child needs.

- Encourage water instead of fruit juice or sugary drinks.
- Serve 100% fruit juice less often, and dilute with water.



Snack time is another chance to get healthy fruits, vegetables, and whole grains into your child's day.

- Try cutting up fruits and serve with cheese or nuts.
- Serve veggie sticks or whole crackers with hummus or peanut butter.

TIPS FOR BUSY FAMILIES

- **Plan ahead.** Write a menu for the week, and use it as a grocery shopping list.
- **Keep meals simple.** Many healthy dinners can be made quickly. Look up recipes in advance, repeat them weekly.
- **Cook in bulk when you have more time.** Weekends might be a good option. Refrigerate or freeze, and use throughout the week.
- **Prep some food ahead.** Wash and cut up vegetables or fruit in advance and store in the fridge. Cook whole-grain noodles or brown to be used in meals during the week.

PICKY EATERS

It's common for children to be picky about the food that they want to eat. Try these tips if you have a picky eater in your home:

- ☑ Serve foods in small portions at scheduled meals and snacks.
- ☑ Offer different foods daily. Encourage your child to choose from a variety of foods and colors.
- ☑ Having your children help in the kitchen is a good way to get them to try new foods. Praise their efforts. Children are less likely to reject foods that they helped make.
- ☑ Even if refused, daily offerings of healthy food like vegetables and fruits will lead to better eating habits as a child grows up. Don't give up!

