

A close-up photograph of a baby's face. The baby is wearing a white chef's hat. Their face is covered in white flour, particularly around the eyes, nose, and cheeks. They have a large, round cookie in their mouth. The baby is looking directly at the camera with wide, blue eyes. The background is a solid orange color.

Hangry?

What should my family eat to stay healthy?

The basics of healthy eating and good nutrition are the same for each member of your family: choose healthy foods most of the time and limit the amount of unhealthy foods you eat. But healthy eating can be difficult to fit into your family's everyday busy life, especially when everyone is immediately "hangry" when they walk in the door. Here are some tips on how to make sure your family's diet is nutritious to keep them healthy now, and throughout their lives.

Why Healthy Eating Matters

When your family follows a pattern of healthy eating, it can:

- Lower their risk of diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease
- Give their bodies and brains the energy they need to be physically active and to concentrate
- Provide the essential vitamins and minerals they need to stay alive and healthy
- Helps them reach and maintain a healthy weight

Over time, your food and drink choices can make a significant difference on your family's overall health. Here are five simple tips on how to make small changes to your family's diet to help them be healthier now and in the future:

- 1 Eat and drink less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars
- 2 Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- 3 Switch to low-fat or fat-free dairy
- 4 Vary the types of protein you eat
- 5 Eat whole grains

Food Label Fast Facts

Reading labels can help you make healthier choices. Here are some tips on making sense out of food labels:

- Select foods that list ingredients that you recognize

- The closer the ingredient is to the top of the list, the more there is in the product
- Sugar is sometimes labeled as fructose, sucrose and corn syrup, so to reduce the amount of added sugar, avoid foods that list sugars at the top of the food label
- To make sure your family is getting enough fiber, look for foods that list whole grains as the first or second ingredient after water
- Fat-free and low-fat food labels don't mean the food is calorie-free

How to Sneak Healthy Food into Your Family's Diet

- Add grated vegetables like zucchini, spinach and carrots to casseroles and sauces
- Use pureed fruit for sweet toppings rather than sugary syrups
- Make fresh dips using pureed vegetables or fruits, flax seed, wheat germ and other healthy additions
- Use whole-grain breads instead of white
- Serve whole-grain crackers instead of chips
- Use whole-wheat flour instead of white

What Do the Percentages Mean?

- Low-calorie=40 calories or less per serving
- Reduced-calorie=at least 25% fewer calories per serving than a similar food
- Light or lite=one-third fewer calories or half the fat content; if more than half the calories are from fat, fat content must be reduced by 50% or more
- Sugar-free=less than ½ gram of sugar per serving
- Reduced sugar=at least 25% less sugar per serving than a similar food
- Fat-free or 100% fat free=less than ½ gram fat per serving
- Low-fat=3 grams or less per serving
- Reduced-fat=at least 25% less fat than a similar food

ACTIONITEMS

What your family eats can impact their health now and into the future. Good nutrition can lower their risk of diseases, and help them reach and maintain a healthy weight. You can help your family eat healthy by choosing nutritious foods most of the time, and limiting the amount of unhealthy foods they include in their diet.

