

4-3-2-1-0: Steps to a Healthier You



4-3-2-1-0 is a tool to help your family live healthier. These five habits can have the biggest impact on health and weight for kids and teens. Making small changes based on 4-3-2-1-0 will help you feel more positive about your child's well-being. Tip: These changes work best when everyone in the family gets involved.

Eat **4** family meals each week

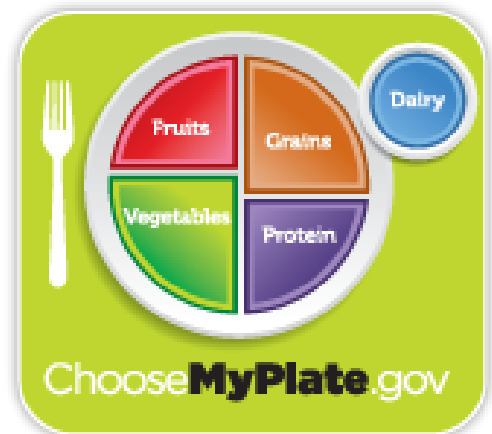
Eating as a family is one of the most important things you can do for your child's health. Family meals help your child to do better in school, feel better about themselves, and have better social skills. Family meals help your child to grow in the way that is right for him or her.

- **Make eating together as a family a priority.** Use this time to talk with each other or share something that happened that day. If your whole family cannot eat together try to have your child eat with at least one other family member. This habit leads to better food choices and helps create stronger family relationships.
- **Eat at a table, with electronics such as TV and smart phones turned off** or out of the room. Eating with the TV on can be so distracting that you don't even notice how much you are actually eating. Have everyone put their phones in a basket and keep it out of the room during dinner time. Do not allow eating in the bedroom. A kitchen or dining room is where all eating should take place except on special occasions.
- **Plan set days and times on the calendar to eat family meals.** Start with 4 family meals per week. This could be breakfast, lunch, dinner or even a snack time. Clear off an eating surface such as a table so the family has a place to eat.

Eat **3** meals a day

Do not skip meals, especially breakfast. Skipping meals can make you tired and have trouble concentrating. It also slows down how the body burns energy and can lead to weight gain. In fact, kids and teens who eat breakfast daily have healthier weights.

- **Meals should be about 4 to 6 hours apart.** Have healthy snacks between meals if you feel hungry. Try fresh fruit or veggies, nuts, cheese sticks and low sugar yogurt.
- **Don't rush through dinner. Try to make meals last for 20 to 30 minutes.** Children weigh less when their family meals last at least 20 minutes and when the family eats together. Drink water with dinner and put your forks down in between bites to help slow down.
- **Make lunch and dinner look like the My Plate guide.** Aim for 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. For busy nights, try bagged salads or steam bag vegetables. Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter or canned fruit in natural juice for quick use. If you're still hungry, reach for more fruits or vegetables.
- **Limit eating out to no more than 1-2 times per week.** Cutting down on fast food or take-out helps prevent weight gain. Food cooked at home is almost always healthier and lower in unhealthy fats and sugars than restaurant food.



Limit screen time to **2** hours or less each day

You burn almost no energy when you sit in front of a screen! Too much screen time can cause weight gain, lower grades, poor sleep and weak muscles and bones. Screen time includes: TV, computer (not including homework), video games, smart phone, and tablet.

- **Start by cutting back on screen time by 30 minutes each day.** Have mom or dad help with screen time limits by setting a timer. You can also use an app to monitor time spent on smart phones.
- **Sign up for activities you enjoy to keep from being bored.** Look into sports, swimming, cooking, or arts and crafts classes through your school or city. These will help reduce TV time!
- **Start a family game night.** Stock up on board games to keep things fun. You could also plan a family weekend outing such as hiking, skating, swimming or sledding.
- **Have a “black out” time period with no TV and WiFi.** Get creative during this time: turn on the radio and dance, do an art project, read or head outside.
- **Remove the TV from the bedroom.** Children and teens with bedroom TVs score lower on school tests and are more likely to have sleep problems. Having a TV in the bedroom is linked to being overweight.
- **Put away smart phones and tablets at least 1 hour prior to bedtime.** Leave them to charge outside your child or teen's bedroom.

Get at least **1** hour of physical activity every day.

Physical activity means moving your body in a way that makes the heart beat faster and the breath faster. You could do an organized sport or use an exercise video. Active play like tag, dancing, or going to the park is also exercise! Without regular physical activity, kids and teens are more likely to gain extra weight and have weaker hearts, lungs, muscles and bones.

- **Start out slow.** If you're currently doing no physical activity, start with 1 or 2 days a week. Increase the time and number of days each week as your bodies get stronger. Walking, swimming and stretching are good exercises to start with.
- **Take quick exercise breaks.** For every 30 minutes spent sitting, get up and move for 5 minutes. Set a timer to remind you. Try jumping jacks, jogging in place, squats, crunches, marches or lunges. You can do this almost **anywhere!**
- **Look for exercise programs at your local YMCA, recreation departments, Boys and Girls Clubs, or school.** If needed, ask if they offer help with membership fees.
- **Get outside in the warmer months and try indoor workouts in winter.** Move furniture to make space for indoor exercise or try workout videos from YouTube. Make up active games for younger children.
- **Do exercise as a family.** Kids are much more likely to be active when adults in their home are active too. Have the whole family exercise. Take walks, bike rides, or go to exercise classes.

Have **0** sweetened drinks

Sugary drinks like soda, juice, lemonade, chocolate milk and sports drinks can cause weight gain, type 2 diabetes risk, and tooth decay. Just one of these drinks often has more sugar than you should get in an entire day.

- **Stick to drinks with less than 3 grams of sugar per serving** (white milk is one exception). Water and white milk are the best choices for everyday drinks. **If you need some variety, try lemon or orange slices or other fruit to add flavor to water.**
- You can also try flavored waters like:
 - Crystal Light® or Crystal Light Pure®
 - MiO® liquid water enhancer drops
 - Propel® or Powerade Zero®
 - Sparkling ICE® waters

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ½ cup (114g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 30
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 13g	4%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 80%	Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%

Make a plan:

- **Set 1-2 realistic goals together as a family.** For example: “We will go for a 30 minute family walk 3 nights each week”. Post the goals in an area where everyone can see them.
- **Write your family’s goals here:**
 - 1.
 - 2.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.