



HEALTHY LIVING AT HOME

FOOD, FUN & FAMILY

A Guide to Help Busy Families Develop
Healthier Habits at Home

YMCA OF THE USA



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CONTENTS

About Food, Fun & Family	1
Choosing What to Eat.....	3
What and How Much Should I Have on My Plate?	4
Hints for Figuring Out Standard Serving Sizes.....	5
How to Be a Smart Shopper	6
Shopping for Fruits and Veggies.....	6
Shopping for Whole Grains.....	6
Choosing Healthy Fats.....	8
Cutting Salt in the Shopping Aisle	8
Tips for Shopping Healthy on a Budget	9
The Price Is Right	9
Planning for the Week	12
Snack Time: A Bridge Between Meals	13
Helpful Hints for Healthy Choices	14
Active Families Have More Fun!	15
Parents and Caregivers Are Important Role Models!.....	16
Take Control of TV (and Other Screen Time)	17
What Can Kids Do Instead of Watching TV?.....	18

ABOUT FOOD, FUN & FAMILY

At the Y, we're committed to children's development and well-being. We know how challenging it can be for busy families to eat well and get enough physical activity in their days. We also know that learning healthy behaviors begins at home. As a parent and caregiver, you have the greatest influence over the foods your children eat and their activities while out of school. That's why we're here to support you and your family's healthy habits, especially when your time and budget are tight.

This guide, ***Food, Fun & Family***, is part of the Food & Fun Afterschool curriculum, which is one of our tools for creating health environments and supporting the well-being of your children at the Y. We developed the Food & Fun curriculum in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity. It's based on the latest science and is fun and easy to do. We're sharing this guide with you to support your efforts to provide a healthy home environment for your children.

HINTS FOR A HEALTHY HOME

- Serve water at every meal and snack.
- Do not allow sugar-sweetened beverages in your home.
- Serve a fruit and/or vegetable at every meal and snack.
- Choose foods with 0g of trans fat and do not have partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list.
- When buying grains (like bread, crackers, and cereals), choose whole grains.
- Limit screen time (TV, video games, computer) to less than 2 hours each day.
- Do not allow TV sets in children's bedrooms.
- Provide opportunities for your child to engage in at least 1 hour of moderate physical activity every day.

Establishing a healthy and active lifestyle early on contributes to children's well-being in so many ways. This handbook contains lots of tips and ideas for meals and activities that are healthy and fun for the whole family! Inside you'll find information on healthy food and drink choices for grocery shopping and planning family meals and snacks; recipes that are fast, inexpensive, and child friendly; ideas for getting your family more active and limiting TV time; and easy-to-find resources that can help you find information, ideas, and support for making your home a healthy place.

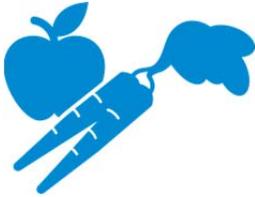
Sometimes, coming up with ideas to be healthy is easy, with opportunities for cooking together or taking a walk. Other days can be harder, but you can set up a routine with regular healthy habits that may help you stay healthy. **Remember that as a parent or caregiver, you are a role model to your children. Show your children that you enjoy healthy habits through the choices you make in your own life, and chances are they will, too!**

This handbook and lots of other great resources are part of the *Food & Fun Afterschool, Second Edition*, created by the Harvard School of Public Health Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity in collaboration with YMCA of the USA. For more information, visit the Food & Fun website at www.foodandfun.org. You can learn more from Harvard by visiting www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/prc/projects/food-fun/. The Y also offers lots of fun, helpful resources through Healthy Family Home, online at www.ymca.net/healthy-family-home.

Healthy Food Is
FUN!

CHOOSING WHAT TO EAT

What does it mean to “eat healthy”? Here are a few guidelines that you can use as a rule of thumb:



EAT YOUR FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Go for five! Try to eat at least five servings of fruits or vegetables a day. Make sure to serve a variety of fruits and vegetables in different colors. French fries and potato chips don't count as vegetables!



INCLUDE “WHOLE GRAINS”

Whole-grain breads, crackers, and cereals as well as whole-wheat pasta and brown rice help you feel full longer. Check the ingredient list! Serve foods that list a whole grain (like whole-wheat flour, oats, or barley) as the first ingredient and that don't include sugar as one of the first three ingredients.



CHOOSE HEALTHY FATS

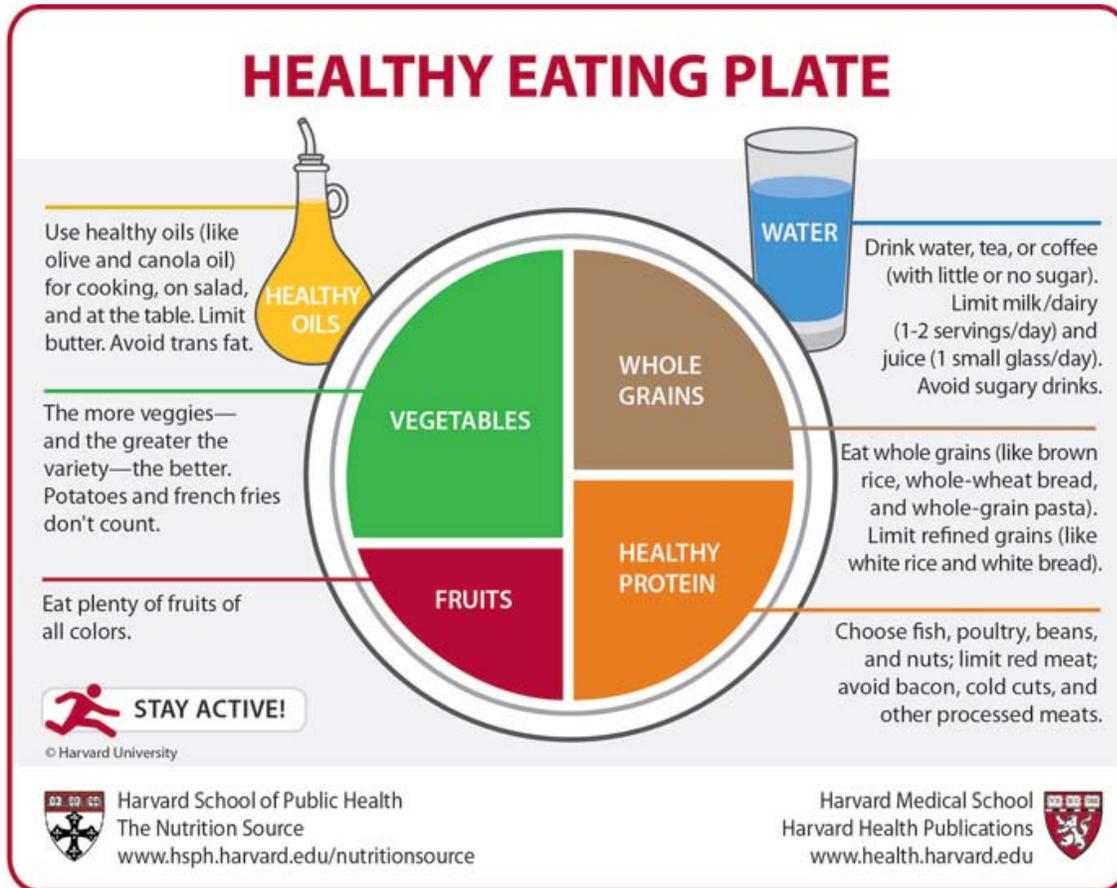
Eat “good for you” fats found in fish and plants such as vegetable oils (olive and canola), nuts, and seeds. Limit saturated fats found in butter, whole milk, and red meat. Avoid foods with trans fats; choose foods with 0g of trans fat and check that partially “hydrogenated vegetable oil” or “shortening” are not in the ingredient list. Avoid fast foods with trans fats.



YOU'RE SWEET ENOUGH ALREADY

Sugar-sweetened drinks like soda, juice drinks, and sports drinks can cause cavities and increase the risk for overweight in kids and adults. In fact, even juice can have just as much sugar as soda! When your kids are thirsty, serve water and lowfat milk. Avoid juice drinks and limit 100% juice to 4 oz. per day (the size of a juice box).

WHAT AND HOW MUCH SHOULD I HAVE ON MY PLATE?



- **Fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits.**
- **Fill a quarter of your plate with a whole grain.** Try whole-wheat bread, whole-grain pasta, brown rice, or quinoa.
- **Fill a quarter of your plate with a protein source.** Try fish, chicken, beans, tofu, nuts, or eggs.
- **Use healthy fats.** Drizzle your salad with olive oil, or sauté your veggies in vegetable oil.
- **Serve water with every meal.** Water is a healthy and inexpensive choice.

Different sized bodies need different amounts of food. Children's portions should be about two-thirds the size of an adult portion. Start with small servings, and if kids have room for seconds, let them decide.

HINTS FOR FIGURING OUT STANDARD SERVING SIZES

- **A serving of whole fruit (an apple, banana, etc.) should be about the size of a baseball.** For chopped or canned fruits and veggies, like pineapple or strawberries, a serving is about a half cup (the size of a light bulb). A serving of dried fruit is about half that amount.
- A serving of whole grains could be 1 slice of whole-grain bread, 1 cup of whole-grain cereal or 1/2 cup of cooked brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, or hot cereal like oatmeal. **One cup is the size of a tennis ball.**
- One serving of protein is three ounces of lean meat, chicken, or fish. **Three ounces of meat looks like a deck of cards.** You can also try alternative proteins like 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, 1/2 cup of cooked beans or 1/3 cup of almonds or mixed nuts.
- For dairy, a serving could be one cup of lowfat milk or yogurt, or 1 ounce of cheese. **One cup of milk is the size of a small juice glass. One ounce of cheese is the size of four dice.**

For more information, visit www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/index.html.

HOW TO BE A SMART SHOPPER

When you're tight on time and money, being a savvy shopper can be a difficult task. But it's not impossible! Here are some tips to help you shop smarter and eat better. Read the *Nutrition Facts* on food labels to help you make better choices, even when you're in a hurry!

SHOPPING FOR FRUITS AND VEGGIES

- Buy fresh fruits and veggies on sale.
- Pick up pre-cut and washed fresh fruit or veggies, like bagged salad mixes. These mixes can save you time, but are usually more expensive than preparing fruits and veggies yourself.
- Stock up on frozen fruits and veggies. Add a handful of frozen veggies to soups, stir-fry, or homemade pizza or frozen mixed berries to yogurt.
- Dried fruit makes a great snack!

SHOPPING FOR WHOLE GRAINS

- Select whole-grain foods by looking for key words on the food labels and ingredient list. Here's how you do it:
 - **Read the ingredient list.** Choose breads, crackers, and cereals that have a whole grain (like whole wheat, barley, oats, rye, or brown rice) listed first on the ingredients and contain no added sugars.
 - **Don't be fooled.** Foods that are "multigrain," "100% wheat," or made with whole grains," often are *not* made with whole grains. Check the ingredients list to make sure that a whole grain is listed first!
 - **Watch out for added sugar.** Avoid foods that list sugar as one of the first three ingredients. Sugar comes in different forms: corn syrup, dextrose, fructose... it is all just sugar! A good rule of thumb is to choose whole grains with no more than 5 grams of sugar.
- Short on time? Pick up some whole-wheat pitas, whole-wheat or corn tortillas, or whole-wheat English muffins for a change from sandwich bread.
- Try something new! Choose quick-cooking grains such as whole-grain pasta, brown rice, or quinoa.

For more information on healthy whole-grain snacks and foods, visit the parent section of www.foodandfun.org and look for smart shopper tips for grains.

CHOOSING HEALTHY FATS

FAT	WHAT IS IT?	WHERE IS IT?	ADVICE?
Unsaturated	Oils found in plants & fish	Vegetable oils like olive & canola oil, fish, nuts, seeds, peanut butter	Eat more of these!
Saturated	Fats found mostly in animal foods	Butter, ice cream, red meat, sour cream, lard, palm & coconut oils	Eat low or nonfat dairy & lean meats
Trans	Vegetable oils chemically changed to increase the shelf life of processed foods	Packaged snacks (cookies, crackers, etc.), fast food, baked goods, & stick margarine	AVOID these!



SHOP FOR THESE EASY SUBSTITUTES TO CUT DOWN ON THE UNHEALTHY FAT IN YOUR FAVORITE RECIPES

- Instead of 1 cup cream → Use 1 cup lowfat milk
- Instead of 1 cup melted butter, stick margarine, or shortening for baking → Try 1 cup vegetable oil
- Instead of 1 Tbsp. of butter or stick margarine for sautéing → Use 1 Tbsp. canola, olive, or vegetable oil

CUTTING SALT IN THE SHOPPING AISLE

Look on the nutrition label of canned, boxed, frozen, and prepared foods to ensure sodium (salt) levels are below 300 mg/serving.

- **Watch for hidden salt in bread:** Compare different brands and types of bread for the lowest sodium content. For example, one brand of whole-wheat bread has 400 mg/serving, while another has only 260 mg/serving.
- **Choose real cheese instead of cheese products:** One ounce of a common processed cheese food contains 410 mg—that's 27% of your daily sodium intake! One ounce of cheddar cheese has only about 180 mg—12% of your daily sodium, making it a healthier choice.
- **Compare lunch meats:** Lunch meats are high in sodium, but can vary by brand. Also, consider sandwich options that are lower in salt, like low-sodium peanut butter, bananas, or fresh vegetables with hummus!
- **Fresh is best:** Most processed foods are high in salt, so choose fresh foods and try seasoning them with various spices, herbs, and citrus—instead of salt.

TIPS FOR SHOPPING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET



Eating healthy doesn't have to be expensive. While there's a *big* difference between choosing whole-wheat bread over white bread for your health, there is little to no difference for your wallet. Follow these tips to find out how you can load up your grocery cart with healthy food without blowing your budget!

CHANGE YOUR SHOPPING HABITS

Plan ahead. Design a weekly menu, and match your grocery shopping to the meals on the menu. This will help avoid wasting food.

Eat before you shop. It will help you stick to your shopping list!

Shop around the edges of the store, where the food is healthier and fresher. The middle aisles have more processed and junk foods.

Try store brands. These are often cheaper and just as good!

Keep an eye out for sales, specials, and coupons for healthy foods! Sign up for your grocer's bonus/discount card for additional savings.

CHANGE WHAT YOU BUY

Choose your fresh fruits and veggies! Some produce costs less when it is in season. Other fruits and veggies like apples, bananas, carrots, and celery are available at a low price year round!

Convenience is key! Try frozen or canned fruits in light syrup or 100% juice, and frozen or canned veggies without added salt. They are great options that make eating healthy easier!

Buy in bulk, if you will use it and can store it.

Switch from brand names to generic store brands.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Check out these low-priced healthy foods:

FRUITS

- Apple slices
- Apricots
- Raisins
- Banana
- Applesauce
- Canned fruit in 100% juice
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Dried mixed fruit, no added sugar
- Avocados
- Frozen berries

VEGETABLES

- Celery
- Salsa
- Frozen peas
- Canned corn
- Cucumber
- Colored pepper slices
- Baby carrots
- Broccoli
- Salad
- Tomatoes
- Canned veggies without added salt

WHOLE GRAINS

- Whole-wheat bread
- Whole-grain crackers
- Quinoa
- Whole-wheat bagels
- Brown rice
- Corn tortillas
- Whole-wheat tortillas
- Whole-wheat English muffins

PROTEIN

- Canned black beans
- Hard-boiled egg
- Peanut butter
- Canned tuna
- String cheese
- Mixed nuts
- Hummus
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese

WATER: BEST CHOICE FOR YOUR WALLET AND YOUR BODY!

Water is a great drink choice for kids. Make sure that a pitcher of water is available every day at the dinner table. Kids should also drink plenty of water when they are playing and being active.

JAZZ UP WATER WITH THESE SIMPLE TRICKS!

- Add sliced fruit like oranges to water for a light, yummy flavor
- Serve sodium-free seltzer water
- Mix 4 oz. of water or seltzer with 4 oz. of 100% fruit juice for a refreshing drink



MAKE MEALTIMES FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Eating together as a family is not only a great way to stay close but has been shown to help children maintain healthy habits later on in life. Here are some tips to help make your mealtimes healthy and fun for the whole family.

Be a role model!

- Turn off the TV! Dinnertime is family time!
- Even if your kids say they don't like "healthy foods," if YOU keep enjoying them, your child might try again. It might take months. It might take years. But keep trying!
- Ask for a salad or a side of veggies instead of fries whenever you eat out.
- Limit fast food to no more than once per week.

Set family goals and keep track of your progress!

- For example, one goal may be to eat five fruits and veggies a day, or to cook one new healthy dish each week!

Involve your child in healthy eating!

- Get your kids to help in planning meals. Make a weekly menu and shopping list together, and bring the kids with you to the store. Let them choose the fruits and veggies they would like to try!
- Cooking is an art, and kids love art. There's room to be inventive, creative, and colorful. If your kids see you having fun cooking, they will want to be part of it!

Have fun with your food!

- Have kids make menus for the table, take orders, and serve the food!
- Cut foods into creative shapes. Try out the cookie cutters!
- Try out new recipes. See the Food, Fun & Family Recipe Packet for ideas!

TIPS FOR PARENTS OF "PICKY EATERS"

- Be patient with kids who are shy about trying new foods. Children's tastes change as they grow, so don't be afraid to introduce new foods more than once or twice.
- Most fussy eaters will eventually come out of this stage on their own, particularly if their closest role models (parents!) have healthy eating habits. Your children will look for your reaction to new and different foods. Show them that trying new things is fun!
- Encourage kids to try everything on their plate! Don't force a child to eat who's not hungry, but make sure to offer the fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and water kids need!
- Make ONE family meal but be sure to include one or two options you know your child likes. Parents of picky eaters tend to offer their child new foods less often. But many kids will need to be offered a new food at least 10 times before they are willing to try it!*
- **Don't give up!**

NOTE: It's OK for kids to want the same thing over and over as long as their choice is a healthy one. A peanut butter sandwich on whole-wheat bread is perfectly fine, especially if you add bananas, strawberries or 100% fruit spread.

*Source: Carruth et al., 2004.

PLANNING FOR THE WEEK

Planning ahead can help you save time, save money, and prevent wasted food. Plan your weekly dinner menu as a family:

- Include ideas from each family member.
- Include meals where leftovers can be stored and frozen (like soup and stews) or plan to fix a double meal and freeze the extra for later.
- Not a fan of leftovers? Make meals that can be repurposed into another dinner. For example, use leftover roast chicken to make chicken quesadillas.
- Remember—breakfast can be dinner sometimes. Try omelets or scrambled eggs.
- Try one new recipe once a month. Keep a folder of possible new recipes.

Tip: Use a piece of cardboard or construction paper for your family’s weekly dinner menu. Let the kids decorate it and place it where everyone can see what’s for dinner!

Here’s an example of a weekly dinner menu that is healthy, yummy, and most importantly, budget friendly! (See Recipe Pack for recipes).

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Dinner	Whole-wheat spaghetti , tomato sauce, shredded cheese Salad: carrots, bell peppers & cucumber	Roast chicken with vegetables Brown rice	Veggie Quesadillas with chicken Note: use leftover chicken & veggies	Hearty Vegetable soup Whole-wheat rolls	Breakfast dinner! Whole-wheat banana pancakes & turkey sausage Fruit salad
Beverage	Water	1% Milk	Seltzer water	Water	1% Milk
Price per serving*	\$1.02	\$0.78	\$0.74	\$0.88	\$1.11
Price: family of four	\$4.08	\$3.12	\$2.96	\$3.52	\$4.44

*Prices are estimates based on national price averages. Prices in the area where you shop may be more or less expensive.

NOW TRY MAKING YOUR OWN DINNER MENU FOR THE WEEK:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY

SNACK TIME: A BRIDGE BETWEEN MEALS

Snacks are an important part of your child's daily diet. Children need healthy snacks between meals to give them energy and nutrients. A good snack includes at least one fruit or vegetable AND one whole grain or protein. Use these tips when your child says:

"I'M HUNGRY!"

- **Homemade snack packs!** Rather than buying more expensive and less healthy prepackaged snacks, assemble snacks at home in small baggies. Mix together nuts and seeds, whole-grain cereal, and dried fruit.
- **Be prepared.** Have a supply of washed, cut up fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator. Store them in clear containers at eye level so kids can see them.
- **Cut out the trans fat!** Partially hydrogenated oils are often hidden in packaged foods like cookies and crackers as well as some popcorn and peanut butter.
- **Try naturally sweet.** Replace high-sugar options with snacks that don't have added sugar. Use fresh, frozen, or dried fruit in yogurt or to make smoothies!
- **Serve cereal?** A cup of whole-grain cereal with less than 5 grams of sugar + lowfat/skim milk + fruit (like cut up strawberries or bananas) = a great snack!
- **Try something new!** Bored with the same old thing? Wander the grocery aisles and check nutrition labels.
- **Don't forget the fun.** Try recipes that engage your child. See the recipe packet for fun and healthy snacks like Bugs on a Log, Tasty Bug, and Butterfly Bites.



"I'M THIRSTY!"

- Serve water or milk. For added fun try:
 - Adding fruit or frozen 100% fruit juice ice cubes to water.
 - Making juice "spritzers"—Mix a splash of 100% juice with sodium-free seltzer water.
 - Making "sun tea"—Place teabags or fresh mint leaves in a pitcher of water and leaving it out in the sun for several hours.
- **Do not buy drinks with added sugars.** Remember that sugar is sometimes listed as sucrose, high fructose corn syrup, or dextrose. Don't be fooled, it's all just sugar!
- **Set limits.** Limit soda and other sugary drinks (sweetened ice teas, fruit punch, etc.) to one 8-ounce serving per week.
- **Skip the sports drinks.** Water is the best drink for active kids.
- **Avoid "diet" drinks** with sugar substitutes like saccharin, aspartame, sucralose, or Splenda.
- **Limit 100% juice** to 4 ounces per day (juice box size).



See the recipe packet for healthy, yummy snack ideas the whole family will enjoy!

HELPFUL HINTS FOR HEALTHY CHOICES



IF YOUR KIDS SNACK ON

Potato chips

Fruit snacks

Processed crackers

Packaged muffins

Popsicles

French fries

Whole milk

Ice cream

White bread

Packaged cookies

Candy

Soda

CONSIDER THESE SNACKS INSTEAD

Granola bars*

Whole-grain crackers with hummus

Air-popped popcorn, whole-wheat crackers, and cheese

Homemade muffins with carrots, zucchini, or oat bran

Yogurt popsicles (see recipe pack)

Dried berries, raisins, pineapples, mangos or banana chips

100% fruit juice pops or frozen bananas

Lowfat or skim milk

Plain seltzer water with a splash of fruit juice

100% whole-wheat bread with peanut butter*

Baked carrot fries (see recipe packet)

* Look for healthy brands that contain no partially hydrogenated oils and therefore no unhealthy trans fat.

ACTIVE FAMILIES HAVE MORE FUN!

When adults think about exercise, we imagine going to the gym or playing a sport. But being physically active can be anything from playing on a baseball or basketball team to taking the stairs instead of the elevator or playing at recess. Whenever you move your muscles, breath heavier and feel your heart beat faster you are engaging in physical activity. It's important to be physically active every day to stay healthy.

Kids should get at least **1 hour or more** of physical activity every day. This can be done all at once, like playing in a soccer match, or be spread out in periods of 10–15 minutes such as taking the dog for the walk, raking leaves, and playing on the jungle gym.

Physical activity can be moderate or vigorous. Kids should do vigorous activities at least 3 times each week (*Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*). What's the difference between moderate activity and vigorous activity?

Did you know?

Staying active over time will give you more energy and focus, reduce stress, and helps prevent heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and osteoporosis (weak bones).

Here are some examples:

What is moderate activity?		What is vigorous activity?	
Games and sports that are similar to fast walking:		Games and sports that are more intense than fast walking. They make you sweat:	
hopscotch	kickball	swimming	basketball
playground play	4 square	jumping rope	running
bike riding	Frisbee	soccer	aerobic dancing
walking to school	skateboarding or rollerblading	active games that involve running or chasing like tag	martial arts like Karate

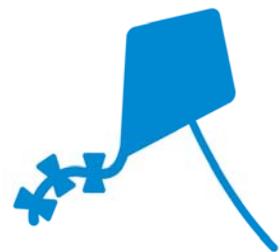
Tip: Make getting more physical activity a family project. Encourage everyone to think of fun things to do during the week and plan for fun weekend activities. Making a physical activity log and posting it on the refrigerator can help everyone plan for and keep track of their activities each month!

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ARE IMPORTANT ROLE MODELS!

Don't forget that grownups need to stay active too! Adults should try to do at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate activity or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous activity each week. *Show your kids that you enjoy being active and chances are they will follow your lead!* Kids with active families are more likely to stay active as adults.

When thinking about how to be more active, make sure to choose activities that are right for you and your family. This means getting to know what resources are available in your area and selecting activities that are safe and appropriate for your children's ages. Most importantly, find ways to incorporate more activity into your daily routine. Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Walk whenever possible**
 - Walk (or bike!) whenever you can. To find safe routes for walking or biking to your child's school check out: www.saferoutesinfo.org
 - Take the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator
 - Go up hills instead of around them
- **Move more in your home and neighborhood**
 - Involve kids in active chores, like putting away groceries or sweeping the house
 - Do yard work. Get your children to help rake, weed, or plant at home or at a park in your neighborhood
- **Play with your kids after school**
 - Play a game of catch or tag after school, or help your child practice their favorite sport
 - Play a round of Simon Says with your kids
 - Go for a swim at your Y or community pool
- **Plan active family weekends**
 - Head to a nearby park for a family game of Frisbee or Wiffle ball. If there's a good breeze, bring a kite with you!
 - Pack a healthy picnic and go on an adventure. Check out local spots nearby, including national parks and recreation areas. Go to www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm to find sites near you!



Whatever your family chooses to do to stay active, make sure that you find activities that fit into your daily lives. Be sure to select activities that you enjoy and ask your children what activities they want to do. Don't be afraid to explore and try new things! For more tips and ideas, visit www.ymca.net/healthy-family-home. Also see www.playworksusa.org and www.kidshealth.org/parent.

TAKE CONTROL OF TV (AND OTHER SCREEN TIME)



After a stressful day, kids and parents often look to the TV to help them relax and unwind. It's an easy way to beat boredom or get the kids to settle down. While we all enjoy watching TV sometimes, each day kids watch an average of 4 hours of television and then spend 2 additional hours using the computer or playing video games!

Why is this a problem? Sitting in front of a screen for hours on end leads to less physical activity, overeating, and a higher risk for becoming overweight. When we watch TV our bodies are still and we tend to snack more. While we watch we also see lots of advertising for high calorie, high sugar foods which have a big influence on kids. Spending time in front of the screen can also take away from time that could be spent reading or working on homework.

While taking control of your family's screen time may seem like a big task, it is one of the most valuable things you can do for your kids health now and as they grow into adulthood. Check out these suggested house rules that you can put in place to help everyone in your family reduce screen time!

HOUSE RULES FOR TV

- 2 hours/day or less* of total screen time—TV, nonschool related computer, and video games.
- No TV during homework.
- No TV sets in any bedrooms.
- Meal time = Family time. No eating while watching and no TV during meal times.
- No surfing—watch favorite shows only.
- Limit viewing to set days/times.

Here are some tips to help you and your family work together to reduce screen time:

- **Be a good role model.** Tell your children that sitting less and moving more is an important way to stay healthy. They will have more energy and more fun. Most importantly, try to cut down on your own TV viewing habits. Your kids will follow your lead!
- **Don't use TV as a reward or a punishment.** This makes TV seem even more important to children!
- **Use technology.** Screening devices can remove commercials and limit the time kids spend on the computer or watching TV. TiVo, TV Allowance, and parental controls in Windows Vista are all helpful tools.
- **Be an active watcher.** Whenever you do spend time in front of the TV, try to do something active like yoga or lifting weights. Challenge your family to a push-ups, jumping jacks, or sit-ups competition during commercial breaks.

WHAT CAN KIDS DO INSTEAD OF WATCHING TV?

Provide your kids with alternatives to watching TV, such as playing outside, getting involved in a new hobby, or joining a sports team. Your local Y offers tons of ways for kids and families to be active, learn new things, make friends, and have fun—together! You can also check into programs are offered at schools and in your neighborhood. Some programs are free through schools or towns, and many offer scholarships. You may be surprised by the choices you find once you begin to look!

Here are some other ideas:

- **Get outside!** Go for a bike ride around the neighborhood. Check out nearby public parks or gardens. Bring a kite with you or a basketball to shoot some hoops.
- **Take up a new hobby!** Encourage your kids to learn to play a musical instrument, take dance or art classes at your local community center, try out for a part in the school play, or join a club!
- **In the summertime,** check out the community pool in your area or find a miniature golf course (you can also make your own in your back or front yard!)
- **Volunteer together!** Check with your community center or local soup kitchen and spend the day helping out and getting to know your community as a family.
- **Join the kids!** Try out old-fashioned games like hopscotch, tag, jump rope, and hide-and-seek. Set up a scavenger hunt around the house or your neighborhood.
- **On rainy days,** head to the library, a museum, or the zoo. These are often free, and they're fun for the whole family! At home, work on an arts and crafts project like making bead necklaces or making your own play dough (do an Internet search for "playdough recipe"). Card and board games as well as reading together are also great ways to spend time indoors as a family.



***Did you know?**
U.S. kids spend as much time
watching TV as they spend
in school or any activity
besides sleeping!*

For more ideas of things to do instead of watching TV, check out *Do More, Watch Less*, by the California Department of Health Services:

www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/schoolhealth/Documents/FINAL%20English%20DMWL%204%2007.pdf

You'll find many helpful resources at Healthy Family Home, a YMCA Initiative, at www.ymca.net/healthy-family-home, or contact your local Y. Also visit www.foodandfun.org to learn more.

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