

# Eat Right

## Food and Nutrition Tips from Kids Eat Right

# Healthy Meals Please!

Kids today snack more and eat fewer regular meals than ever before. As a result, they may be missing out on many of the nutrients they need to grow and stay healthy. Eating more homemade meals, and less fast food, can ensure that kids get the fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and low fat dairy their growing bodies need.



### Make Meal Time Family Time

For most busy families, sitting down to a healthy meal can seem like a challenge. Here's why eating together is worth the effort, plus tips to make planning family meals easier:

- Kids who eat frequent family dinners have higher intakes of calcium, iron, fiber and many vitamins.
- Sitting down to meals as a family teaches kids social skills and manners.
- When parents eat healthfully, kids are more likely to do the same.
- Kids who eat regular family meals are less likely to be overweight or obese.
- Teenagers who eat with their families are less likely to use drugs, alcohol or cigarettes.
- Kids who have family meals are less likely to suffer from mental health issues.
- Because mealtime is a time to reconnect, families who eat together are closer.

## Make the Most of Family Mealtimes

- Breakfast counts too. Make sure your family starts the day with a healthy morning meal to give them the energy and nutrients they need to perform at their best.
- Make sure to offer at least one fruit or vegetable at every meal and snack.
- Don't promise your children candy or dessert as a reward for good behavior. Get creative with rewards for your kids that are even more meaningful than treats:
  - Story time
  - Game time (kid's choice)
  - Stickers
  - Hugs and kisses and lots of praise
  - Listen to favorite kid's music in the car and sing-a-long together

- Mix whole or 2% milk with 1% or skim milk to help kids get used to the thinner texture of the lower fat milks.
- Low-fat chocolate or strawberry flavored milks are a way to include calcium in the diet if your child doesn't like plain milk.

### 3 Minute Chicken Fajitas

Serve skinless rotisserie chicken or canned, drained black beans in warmed whole-wheat tortillas. Top with chopped tomatoes, onions, avocado, shredded low-fat cheddar cheese and salsa.

## Healthy Drinks, Please

- Provide water. It's low in sodium and has no sugar or calories.
- Don't serve soft drinks or other sugary drinks.
- For strong and healthy bones, milk is an excellent source of calcium.
  - Offer low-fat milk once your child reaches 2 years old.

*Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitians.*

For more articles, tips, recipes and videos to help your kids eat healthy, visit [www.kidseatright.org](http://www.kidseatright.org).

To find a registered dietitian in your area, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).



Kids Eat Right is a joint effort of the **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics** and the **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation** to end childhood obesity and provide the resources to help families, communities, and policy makers ensure quality nutrition for children.