

Tips to Avoid Morning Crunch Time:

Plan ahead.

Make sure you always have plenty of breakfast items on hand.

Schedule plenty of time into your morning routine for breakfast.

Remember, some children need extra time getting ready in the morning. Make sure to leave enough time for breakfast.

Don't become a short order cook.

Have your children choose between 3 options that don't require more than a toaster or microwave.

Prepare the night before.

Prepare the kitchen with bowls, spoons, bananas, and cereal left on the counter for kids to help themselves.

Quick Breakfast Ideas:

- » Whole grain cereal with cut-up fruit and skim milk.
- » Whole wheat mini-bagel with peanut butter and sliced bananas.
- » Whole grain toaster waffles with blueberries on top and 1 Tbsp of syrup.
- » A cup of low fat yogurt mixed with cut-up fruit and a crunchy whole grain cereal.
- » Microwave plain oatmeal with raisins and cinnamon.
- » A whole grain English muffin topped with melted low fat cheese.



Healthy Breakfast Ingredients:

- » Whole wheat toast
- » Whole grain cereal
- » Low fat yogurt
- » Cut-up fruit
- » Oatmeal
- » Peanut butter
- » Low fat cream cheese

Healthy Drinks for Breakfast:

- » Low fat or skim milk
- » 4 ounces of 100% juice
- » Water
- » Flavored water

For more tips on helping kids eat better and move more, visit www.mass.gov/MassinMotion

Information adapted from the NAP SACC Program, Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 2006.



Tips to Help Your Family Snack Smart:

Plan ahead.

Plan your snacks ahead of time so that you know what ingredients you need.

Pack them ahead of time.

It's a whole lot easier to remember to take a healthy snack if they are already packed and ready to go!

Let your kids help.

Kids can help wrap foods, put snacks into bags, and clean up afterwards.

Create your own 100-calorie packs.

Instead of buying pre-packaged 100-calorie snacks (which can be expensive and loaded with sugar and salt), buy regular-sized bags (like pretzel sticks). Use the nutrition label to figure out how many items equal 100 calories. Fill 10 sandwich bags with 100 calories worth of snacks.

Quick Snack Ideas:

- » ½ banana spread with 1–2 tsp peanut butter
- » ½ cup strawberries
- » ½ cup of canteloupe cut up into 1 inch cubes
- » 30 Goldfish crackers
- » 1–3 cups of 99% fat free microwave popcorn
- » 20 mini fat free pretzels
- » 10 flavored mini rice cakes
- » Celery slices dipped in 2 Tbsp of low fat ranch dressing
- » ½ of a small apple cut into slices and dipped into light yogurt
- » Carrot or pepper sticks dipped into ¼ cup of hummus



Healthy Snack Ingredients:

- » Whole grain bread or crackers
- » Peanut butter
- » Cucumbers or celery
- » Bell peppers
- » Apples, bananas, or berries
- » Cantaloupe
- » Low fat yogurt
- » String cheese

Healthy Drink Choices:

- » Water
- » Seltzer or flavored water
- » Low fat or skim milk
- » 4 ounces 100% fruit juice

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Tips to Avoid the Evening Rush:

Plan ahead.

Make sure you always have plenty of ingredients on hand.

Know what you are going to make.

Knowing what you want to make before you get home helps you avoid rummaging around looking for the quickest thing (which is often the unhealthiest).

Don't become a short order cook.

Make one meal for everyone; give each child a night to choose what will be served.

Give each child a job to help out.

Young children can set the table, fetch items from low shelves and the refrigerator, mix, and help clean up.

Quick Dinner Ideas:

English Muffin Pizza:

Top a whole wheat English muffin with jarred sauce, sliced veggies, and low fat cheese.

Omelets:

Combine eggs and your favorite chopped veggies, top with salsa.

Burrito:

Wrap a whole wheat tortilla around some canned black beans, chopped veggies, and low fat cheese.

Mac and cheese:

Add frozen veggies (without sauce) and canned tuna or salmon to boxed macaroni and cheese (try the whole wheat variety!)

Potato Pal:

Top half of a small baked potato with low fat yogurt and then add eyes (peas), a nose (half a cherry tomato), and a smile (low fat cheese wedge). Be creative, you'll be surprised at how many foods can turn into eyes, noses and smiles!



Chicken Nachos:

Using fresh, shredded chicken and high fiber tortilla chips can be a healthy appetizer or dinner for kids. Add tortillas, pre-cooked shredded chicken, diced tomatoes, peppers and onions, and low fat shredded cheese to a plate and bake in oven or microwave until cheese is melted.

A Healthy Plate:

- » Use a small plate
- » ½ veggies and fruit
- » ¼ lean meat or meat alternative
- » ¼ whole grains
- » Low fat milk or water
- » Avoid high fat condiments such as dressings and mayo

Healthy Grains:

- » Brown rice
- » Whole grain bread
- » Whole wheat pasta
- » Whole wheat pita or flat bread
- » Whole wheat tortillas
- » Quinoa or bulgar

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Why Celebrate Healthy

Kids love a celebration — what food is served really doesn't matter.

By centering a party on eating “junk” food, kids begin to associate unhealthy foods with fun occasions. Why not build that association around healthy foods instead?

A Healthier Menu

You don't have to scrap the cake, just keep pieces child size and include healthier foods, too. Try these!

- » Fruit kabobs
- » Low fat pudding
- » Angel food cake topped with fruit
- » Bite size sandwiches
- » Cheese cubes
- » Pita or bagel chips
- » Skim milk or flavored fizzy water
- » Carrots and dip

Celebrations don't always have to revolve around food! There are other ways to have a good time. Try giving celebrations a new theme without food as the focus:

- » A scavenger hunt
- » Ice skating
- » Bowling
- » Swimming
- » Sledding
- » Arts and crafts

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A sugary drink is a drink with sugar added. These drinks include sodas, juices, flavored milk and milk alternatives, sports drinks, energy drinks, and blended coffees and teas. Kids who drink one or more sugary drinks a day have a higher risk of being overweight, and sweetened drinks can lead to tooth decay.

6 Easy Tips to Help Your Family Cut Down on Sugary Drinks

1. Serve Water

Water is always the best choice, so let it flow at home. Not only is water calorie-free, but drinking it teaches kids to use water as a thirst-quencher. For variety and a different flavor, add cut-up fruit such as lemons or limes, or try seltzer or water flavored with natural fruit essences.

2. Stick to Skim or 1% Low Fat Milk

Low fat (1%) and skim milk contain just as many nutrients as whole milk but with little or no fat.

3. Just a Little Juice

If your child likes juice, be sure to serve 100% juice. Fruit juice still has a lot of sugar, so limit it to just a few times a week and keep servings to about 4 ounces a day.

4. Limit Soda

Soda contains “empty calories,” meaning it has no nutritional value and can lead to weight gain. One can of soda contains nearly 10 packs of sugar! Diet sodas contain artificial sweeteners, and many sodas contain caffeine, which is not safe for young children. If your older kids like soda, don’t ban it entirely — let them know it’s a once-in-a-while beverage.

5. Say No to Energy & Sports Drinks

Energy drinks contain sugar as well as a lot of caffeine, which can be dangerous. Sports drinks are also high in sugar and are not necessary unless your older children are vigorously active for prolonged amounts of time in high temperatures (such as participating in a soccer game in hot weather).

6. Serve Less

Many sugar sweetened drinks are supersized and pack a lot of sugar and calories. Encourage your children to choose smaller portions of sugary drinks.





What's in a Name? How To Tell Whether Your Drink Is Sweetened

Sweeteners that add calories to a beverage have many different names. Below is a list of words for common sweeteners. If these appear in the ingredients list of your favorite beverage, you are drinking a sugar-sweetened beverage.

- » Brown sugar
- » Cane sugar
- » Corn syrup
- » Crystalline fructose
- » Dextrose
- » Fructose
- » Fruit juice concentrates
- » High-fructose corn syrup
- » Honey
- » Sucrose
- » Sugar
- » Syrup

Tips for Helping Kids Eat (and Like!) New, Healthy Foods

Start young.

The best time to form lifelong healthy eating habits is when kids are very young. Offer a variety of foods on a regular basis.

Pair the new with the familiar.

Instead of serving an entirely new meal, pair one new food with meals your child already enjoys. For example, cut up green beans and serve with macaroni and cheese.

Start small.

Start by serving a small amount of the new food and let your child know they can have more if they choose. Also, offer the new food before the rest of the meal, when your child is the hungriest.

Separate new ingredients.

If your child likes plain food, try serving the ingredients of a casserole separately before introducing it all together.

Make it FUN.

Choose colorful foods like tri-colored pasta or cut food into fun shapes with a cookie cutter. Encourage your child to make a happy face with the new food before trying it. Keep it interesting.



Include kids in meal planning.

Kids are more likely to try new foods when they're involved in the planning process. Let your child plan a meal and take them grocery shopping for the ingredients. Let them help prepare the meal with small tasks in the kitchen or setting the table.

Be a good role model.

Kids want to be like the adult in their life. Be a good role model by trying new foods with your child.

Let them decide.

Instead of forcing your child to try something, ask them to describe the color, texture, and smell of the new food and let them make their own choice. Ask them what they think of it. Make it clear there is no right or wrong answer.

Make sure it is a positive learning experience.

Never discipline a child for not wanting to try something new or reward them with unhealthy snacks when they do. Instead, give them attention and encouragement. That's what every child really needs.

If at first you don't succeed, try again.

Don't give up the first time your child refuses a new food. It may take a dozen attempts before they agree to try something. Be patient, understanding, and keep it fresh!



Choosing smart, fun snacks and meals for your family is a great way to get them excited about eating healthy and trying new foods!

Bagel Caterpillar

Split mini bagels in half. Cut each half into half circles. Spread the halves with toppings like tuna salad, egg salad, or peanut butter. Decorate with sliced cherry tomatoes or banana slices. Arrange the half circles to form the body of a caterpillar. Use olives or raisins for the eyes.

Frozen Bananas & Frozen Juice Cups

Put a wooden stick into a peeled banana. Cut large bananas in half first. Wrap in plastic wrap and freeze. Once frozen, peel off the plastic and eat. You can also pour 100% fruit juice into small paper cups. Freeze. To serve, peel off the paper and eat.



Frozen Graham Cracker Sandwiches

Mix mashed bananas and peanut butter, spread between graham crackers and freeze for a few hours.

Fruit Smoothies

Blend fresh or frozen fruit with low fat yogurt and milk or 100% juice. Try 100% orange juice, low-fat yogurt and frozen strawberries.

Ants on a Log

Thinly spread peanut butter on narrow celery sticks. Top with a row of raisins or other diced dried fruit.

Smiley Sandwiches

Top a slice of bread with peanut butter and use an apple slice for a smile and raisins for the eyes.



Fruit Cuts

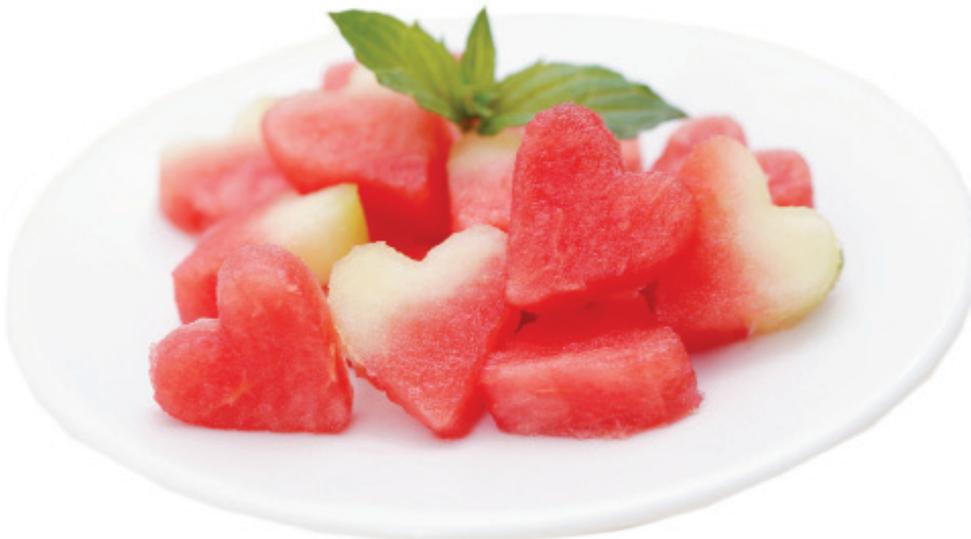
Cut big pieces of fruit (such as cantaloupe, watermelon, or melon) and use fun cookie cutters to make bite-sized pieces of fruit with different shapes.

Garden Octopus

For the octopus's body, remove the pepper's stem end and scoop out the white ribs and seeds. For the arms, slice a second pepper into strips. Place some dip or hummus (such as French onion dip) in a shallow bowl, and arrange the octopus. Use a bit of dip and sliced black olives to give your creature eyes. Serve with extra veggies, such as carrot sticks, fresh green beans, lightly steamed broccoli spears, and sliced cucumbers.

Sandwich on a Stick

Cut up cubes of bread, cheese, and low-sodium turkey or ham. Slide the cubes onto a skewer with other foods your child likes, such as a grape tomato, a piece of lettuce, a pickle, or an olive. Set out a side of mayo or mustard for dipping.





Fun, Food and Family — Making Family Meals Enjoyable

Pulling together a family meal can get stressful. But starting good eating habits while kids are young can lead to a lifetime of healthy eating.

That's why it's important to set the stage early for kids to enjoy mealtimes and have a good relationship with food. You have the ability to make meals less stressful for you and more fun for the whole family!

Set aside at least 20 minutes for the meal

This will give you and your family plenty of time to relax, try different foods, and talk about things that matter to you. Taking 20 minutes for a meal can also help your family cut back on over-eating. It takes 20 minutes for the message to travel from your belly to your brain that you're full!

Turn off the TV and computer

Distractions like TV, phones or computer games during a meal make it harder to talk as a family. Turning them off allows you to have pleasant discussions about the day's events.

Sit down

Time things as best as you can so that you finish cooking and sit at the table with everyone else — it makes for a better experience for everyone.

Be a role model

Remember that you're teaching your children habits that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Be a role model by eating healthy food choices at the meal, putting your phone away, and being fully present at the meal.

Let your kids help you

This will not only help you, but it helps your kids become more interested in their food and the meal. Let them help you shop for food, make some choices about which foods to serve, or help set the table.





Kids in the Kitchen — Forming Eating Habits One Meal at a Time

Asking kids to help in the kitchen is a great way to get them to try more new foods. Plus, kids are more likely to eat foods and meals that they helped plan or prepare.

As children grow, they are able to help out with different tasks in the kitchen. Some children may develop these skills at different ages — decide what works best with your child.

At 2 years:

- » Wipe tables
- » Hand items to adult to put away (after grocery shopping)
- » Place things in trash
- » Tear lettuce or greens
- » Help “read” a cookbook by turning the pages
- » Make “faces” out of pieces of fruits and vegetables
- » Rinse vegetables or fruits
- » Snap green beans

At 3 years:

All that a 2 year old can do, plus:

- » Add ingredients
- » Talk about cooking
- » Scoop or mash potatoes
- » Squeeze citrus fruits
- » Stir pancake batter
- » Knead and shape dough
- » Name and count foods
- » Help assemble a pizza



At 4 years:

All that a 3 year old can do, plus:

- » Peel eggs and some fruits, such as oranges and bananas
- » Set the table
- » Crack eggs
- » Help measure dry ingredients
- » Help make sandwiches and tossed salads

At 5 years:

All that a 4 year old can do, plus:

- » Measure liquids
- » Cut soft fruits with a dull knife
- » Use an egg beater

Also remember to use kitchen time to teach healthy, safe eating habits to your child.

Remind your child to:

- » Always wash their hands with soap and water before working with food.
- » Wash fruits and vegetables before eating, peeling, or cooking.
- » Sneeze or cough into their upper arm when around food.

Getting enough sleep can help your child live a healthier life. A bedtime routine is a great way to ensure that your preschooler gets enough sleep.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when establishing a bedtime routine:

- » Pick a bedtime and stick to it. Make sure you give your child a reminder about bedtime 30 minutes before and then again at 10 minutes before bedtime.
- » Set fixed times for going to bed, waking up, and taking naps. This helps your child get into a routine.
- » Avoid giving your child anything with caffeine or sugar near bedtime.
- » Make the bedroom quiet and cozy so that it becomes a nice sleeping environment for your child.
- » Use the bed only for sleeping — not for playing or watching TV.
- » Limit food and drink you give to your child before bedtime. These can keep children up at night.
- » Allow your child to choose which pajamas to wear, and which stuffed animal to take to bed.
- » Consider playing soft, soothing music to help your child fall asleep.
- » Tuck your child into bed snugly so they feel safe and secure.

Tips were adapted from Nemours.





Be Active as a Family Whenever, Wherever, However!



Indoors

Being indoors doesn't mean you can't be active. There are lots of things you can do in small spaces to get kids moving more and having fun!

- » Build an obstacle course in the living room, basement or garage with couch cushions and pillows
- » March up and down the stairs
- » Create a Dance Party where every family member teaches their own dance
- » Act out story time — use simple household items for props
- » Combine moving and learning: Sort kitchen containers by size, color, and shape or fold laundry and arrange piles by color

Outdoors

Jogging isn't the only thing you can do outdoors to be active! There are lots of little things you can do with your kids outside that will get you all moving more while spending quality time together.

- » Plant a garden: help everyone plant their own vegetables, fruits and flowers
- » Take a nature hike or climb
- » Run, jog, and walk in a family treasure hunt
- » Wash the car, or play an active game with the hose
- » Go to a park for a walk or to play catch, Frisbee or kick ball





Be active all year long!

Fall

- » Go on a family hike, and look for leaves and nuts you can collect
- » Rake leaves — then jump in them!
- » Go apple picking or head to a pumpkin patch

Winter

- » Go sledding, and make snow angels
- » Build a snowman or a snow-house
- » Walk across the yard and hop back, landing only on your footprints
- » Go ice skating
- » Bundle up and go for a stroll

Spring/Summer

- » Go swimming or jump through the sprinkler
- » Camp, hike or bike
- » Go miniature golfing or fly a kite
- » Have a relay race

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Any movement is good movement.

If you think a small living space or yard means no room for physical activity, think again!

Build an indoor obstacle course.

Turn a walk across a small room into an obstacle course. Use safe items like couch cushions and pillows to stack and scatter for jumping over, falling into, and weaving through.

Physically active story time.

Forget the old fashion “sit and listen” story time. Have your kids stand up and act out a story as you read aloud. Use simple household items for props. Stuffed animals make great supporting actors!

Combine movement and learning any chance you get.

Have your child sort kitchen containers by size, color, and shape. Kids can help fold laundry and arrange clothes into piles by color and then count the piles.

Move more while eating better.

Make up simple songs and dances for preparing family meal favorites. Have an after-dinner “stand up and wiggle” session to help digestion.

Stretch!

Kids get stressed, too. Put on relaxing music, take deep breaths, and lead a stretching session the whole family can benefit from.

Moving while moving.

When you’re in the car, turn up the tunes — kids can raise their hands.

