



# Kinship Link

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## March is National Nutrition Month Put Your Best Fork Forward

### Pro Kinship for Kids

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Dedicate yourself to a healthy lifestyle in 2017 with these 17 food, nutrition, and physical activity tips for national nutrition month. This year's theme is "Put Your Best Fork Forward". So here are some ways to do just that.

1. **Eat Breakfast.** Start your morning with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa, and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit, and whole grain cereal.
2. **Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables.** Fruits and veggies add color, flavor, and texture plus vitamins, minerals, and fiber to your plate. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types including fresh, frozen, and canned.
3. **Watch Portion Sizes.** Get out the measuring cups and see how close your portions are to the recommended serving size. Use half your

plate for fruits and vegetables and the other half for grains and lean protein foods. To complete the meal, add a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt.

4. **Be Active.** Regular physical activity has so many health benefits. Start by doing what exercise you can for at least 10 minutes at a time. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults should get two hours and 30 minutes per week. You don't have to hit the gym - take a walk after dinner or play a game of catch or basketball.
5. **Fix Healthy Snacks.** Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese, or a tablespoon of peanut butter with an apple or banana.
6. **Get to Know Food Labels.** Reading the

Nutrition Facts panel can help you shop, and eat or drink smarter.

7. **Follow Food Safety Guidelines.** Reduce your chances of getting sick by practicing proper food safety. This includes: regular hand washing, separating raw protein foods from ready-to-eat foods, cooking foods to the appropriate temperature by using a food thermometer, and refrigerating foods quickly at the proper temperature to slow bacteria growth.
8. **Get Cooking.** Preparing foods at home can be healthy, rewarding, and cost-effective. Resolve to learn some cooking and kitchen basics, like how to dice an onion, or cook dried beans.
9. **Dine Out without Ditching Your Goals.** You can eat out and stick to your healthy eating plan! The key is to plan ahead, ask questions, and choose foods carefully. Compare nutrition information, if available, and look for healthier options that are grilled, baked, broiled, or steamed.

## Put Your Best Fork Forward Continued

10. **Enact Family Meal Time.** Plan to eat as a family at least a few times each week. Set a regular mealtime. Turn off the TV, phones, and other electronic devices to encourage mealtime talk. Get kids involved in meal planning and cooking, and use this time to teach them about good nutrition.
  11. **Banish Brown Bag Boredom.** Whether it's a lunch for work or school, prevent brown bag boredom with easy-to-fix, healthy lunch ideas. Try a whole-wheat pita pocket with veggies and hummus, or a low sodium vegetable soup with whole grain crackers, or a salad of mixed greens with low-fat dressing and a hard boiled egg.
  12. **Drink More Water.** Quench your thirst by drinking water instead of sugary drinks. Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water if you are active, or live or work in hot conditions.
  13. **Explore New Foods and Flavors.** Add more nutrition and eating pleasure by expanding your range of food choices. When shopping, make a point of selecting a fruit, vegetable, or whole grain that's new to you or your family. Try different versions of familiar foods like purple asparagus, Honeycrisp apples, broccoflower, or quinoa.
  14. **Eat Seafood Twice a Week.** Seafood - fish or shellfish - contains a range of nutrients including healthy omega-3 fats. Salmon, trout, oysters, and sardines are higher in omega-3 and lower in mercury.
  15. **Cut Back on Added Sugars.** Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute empty calories and little or no nutrition. Reviewing ingredients on the food label can help you identify sources of added sugar.
  16. **Eat Less Salt.** Getting too much sodium/salt from foods can play a role in high blood pressure and hypertension, so read your nutrition labels, and eat more fresh foods.
  17. **Experiment with more Plant-Based Meals.** Expand the variety in your menus with budget-friendly meatless meals. Many recipes that use meat and poultry can be made without. Eating a variety of plant foods can help. Vegetables, beans, and lentils are all great substitutes. Try including one meatless meal per week to start out.
- So, do what you can to help your family "Put Your Best Fork Forward in 2017".

## Eating Right with Less Salt

It is recommended that adults and children ages 14 years and older reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams a day. Adults with hypertension, or signs of it are encouraged to reduce their intake further to 1,500 milligrams per day, since that can help to reduce blood pressure.

Here are ways you can eat right with less salt:

- **Focus on Fresh Foods.** Many foods in their original form, such as fruits, vegetables, fresh meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, milk, yogurt, and grains like rice are naturally low in sodium. Include these foods more often in meals and snacks.
- **Eat Processed and Prepared Foods Less Often.** Highly processed and ready-to-eat foods tend to be higher in sodium. Eat these foods only occasionally or in smaller amounts. These are especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli or luncheon meats; and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, soups, and instant flavored noodles and rice.
- **Cook More Often at Home.** Enjoy home-prepared foods where you are in control of how much salt is added. Use little or no salt when cooking. Even if package instructions say to add salt to the water for boiling, it isn't required and can be omitted. When using canned vegetables with salt added, be sure to drain and rinse the vegetables to reduce the amount of salt.
- **Try New Flavors.** Skip the salt and try salt-free seasonings such as herbs, spices, garlic, vinegar, black pepper, or lemon juice. Make your own salt-free seasonings by combining herbs and spices. Mixed herb blend: Mix together 1/4 cup dried parsley flakes, 2 tbsp. dried tarragon, and 1 tbsp. each of dried oregano, dill weed, and celery flakes.
- **Read Food Labels.** Read the Nutrition Facts panel and the ingredients list to find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium. Compare the amount of sodium listed and select the product with the lower amount. Look for foods labeled "low sodium", "reduced sodium", or "no salt added".
- **Use Caution with Condiments.** Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressing, and seasonings packets are high in sodium. Try low-sodium soy sauce and ketchup. Sprinkle only a small amount from a seasoning packet, not the entire amount.
- **Allow Your Taste Buds to Adjust.** Like any change, it can take time for your taste buds to adapt to less salt. Foods lower in sodium may taste differently at first, but over time it's possible to acquire a taste for foods with less salt.