



# Kinship Link

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## Smart Tips for Successful Meals

### Pro Kinship for Kids

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As we hit the summer and kids are at home again, we sometimes think how can I make successful meals for my family everyday. Preparing food at home can be a great way to save money, express creativity, and stay on track with healthful eating. However, cooking can also be a challenge for many people. With a few tips and tools, cooking at home becomes a little bit easier for everyone!

#### Keep a Well-Stocked Pantry

If you don't have time to plan meals some days or have unexpected guests, a well-stocked pantry can relieve some of the pressure when it comes time to make a meal. Keep the following on hand for quick, easy-to-fix dishes.

#### Shelf Stable Products:

- Dried or canned beans, peas, or lentils (such as black, garbanzo, kidney, white, and pinto beans, green, yellow, or split peas and lentils)
- Canned vegetables with no added salt (such as diced tomatoes, peas, green beans, and corn)
- Whole grains (such as brown rice, quinoa, oats, millet, and whole-grain pasta)

- Pouches or canned fish and chicken
- Olive, canola, or other vegetable oils
- Dried herbs and spices

#### Frozen Foods

- ◆ Vegetables (such as broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, and brussels sprouts)
- ◆ Fruit (such as berries, cherries, and bananas)
- ◆ Whole wheat pizza dough
- ◆ Frozen poultry or seafood

#### Invest in the Right Tools

While you may be able to improvise, the following kitchen tools make working in the kitchen easier.

- \* Baking sheets and roasting pans
- \* Stock pot, sauce pans, and skillets
- \* Tongs and spatulas
- \* Slotted and mixing spoons
- \* Potholders and towels
- \* Colander or strainer
- \* Mixing bowls in various sizes
- \* Separate cutting boards for raw and cooked foods
- \* Measuring cups and spoons
- \* Chef knives and vegetable peelers

#### Don't Stress

You don't need to be a master chef in order to whip up something tasty and nutritious. You can create healthy and tasty meals without a recipe.

For example:

- ◇ Bake fish with sauteed veggies and rice
- ◇ Black bean and vegetable burrito
- ◇ Scrambled eggs with cheese, salsa, and whole grain toast

If you don't have an ingredient, try substituting with something similar:

- Make black bean burgers but running short on black beans? Try them with pinto beans instead.
- Having pasta but forgot the sauce? Toss together canned tomatoes, a drizzle of olive oil, and season with herbs to provide that extra flavor.
- If you're missing sour cream, plain Greek yogurt can be used in its place in chili, on potatoes, and in baked goods.
- Cauliflower can replace broccoli in casseroles and soups.



## Smart Tips for Successful Meals continued

### Mix and Match

These easy combinations pair well and contain many items you may already have on hand:

- ◆ Whole grain pasta with garbanzo beans and canned tomatoes, seasoned with basil, and served with a medley of microwaved frozen vegetables on the side.
- ◆ Quinoa with black beans, corn, and bell pepper, dressed with olive oil and lime juice.
- ◆ Salad with lettuce, hard boiled eggs, tuna, tomatoes, and olives, and dressed with a little olive oil and vinegar.
- ◆ Soup using grilled or baked chicken, low-sodium broth, veggies, and brown rice.



## Smart Snacking Tips for Kids

Snacks can play an important role in meeting kids' nutrient needs.

Choosing a variety of foods from all of the food groups will give them the energy they need between meals. It helps to plan and portion out snacks in advance. Kids will usually only need 2 or 3 snacks daily, and these should be provided at least one or two hours before meals. It is often good to try to have a snack contain at least 2 - 3 food groups in it. It is recommended that snacks (and meals) be eaten in an area without distractions. So avoid snacking while watching TV or when using other electronic devices. Better yet, let the kids help prepare the healthy snacks. This is a great time to spend together talking and making memories that will last a lifetime.

Here are a few easy, tasty, (and healthy) snacks to help you get started.

- Parfait: Layer vanilla or plain low-fat yogurt with fruit and dried cereal.
- Toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced fruit or smooth nut butter.
- Blend low-fat milk, frozen strawberries, and a banana for thirty seconds for a delicious smoothie.
- Sandwich cut-outs: Make a sandwich on whole grain bread. Cut out your favorite shape using a big cookie cutter. Eat the fun shape and the edges, too!
- Mini-pizza: Toast a whole wheat English muffin, drizzle with pizza sauce, and sprinkle with low-fat mozzarella cheese.
- Frozen treats: Mix equal amounts of fat-free plain or flavored yogurt with 100% fruit juice, then pour into paper cups, put in a stick, and freeze for a tasty treat.
- Quesadilla: Sprinkle shredded cheese over a corn or whole wheat tortilla; fold in half and microwave for twenty seconds. Top with salsa.
- Spread hummus on a tortilla. Top with a slice of turkey or ham, low-fat cheese, and lettuce. Then roll it up.
- Stuff a whole-grain pita pocket with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.
- Microwave a cup of tomato or vegetable soup and enjoy with whole grain crackers.
- Make a mini-sandwich with tuna or egg salad on a dinner roll.
- Microwave a small baked potato. Top with reduced-fat cheddar cheese and salsa.
- Spread celery sticks with smooth nut butter or low-fat cream cheese. Top with raisins. Enjoy your "ants on a log".
- Dip slices of fruit or whole-grain graham crackers into low-fat vanilla pudding or yogurt.
- Inside-out sandwiches: Spread mustard on a slice of deli turkey. Wrap around a sesame breadstick.
- Rocky road: Smear low-fat chocolate pudding on a whole grain graham cracker, then top with a marshmallow.
- Sprinkle cinnamon on unsweetened applesauce and enjoy with a whole grain graham cracker for a taste similar to apple pie.
- Make you own fruit roll-up by pureeing fruit and either baking it in the oven or by using a dehydrator to dry it out.
- Bake homemade chewy granola bars using whole-grain oats and dried fruit.
- Whip up mini-muffins using healthy ingredients, like whole grain flours and pureed fruit.

Portions sizes for kids are smaller than adults. However, certain foods due to their size pose a choking risk, especially for young children.

See below for a list of foods that may cause choking:

- ◇ Hot dots and sausage links
- ◇ Meat chunks, unless finely chopped and combined
- ◇ Nuts, seeds, and peanut butter
- ◇ Raw apple and pear slices
- ◇ Whole grapes
- ◇ Dried fruit
- ◇ Raw vegetables
- ◇ Whole kernels of corn
- ◇ Popcorn and chips
- ◇ Small candies and chewing gum

