

Set a Positive Example

GOAL: Parents and caregivers will gain confidence to make mealtime a positive experience.

30-60
minutes **without**
recipe/food demo

- or -

45-60+
minutes **with**
recipe/food demo

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss ways to create a positive mealtime environment
- Practice ways to model and encourage positive eating habits for kids and the family
- Practice skills for when food refusal occurs
- Use encouraging words and positive food talk

EXPLORE THE HANDOUTS

SHARE & DISCUSS

- Raise a Healthy Eater
- Veggie Appeal
- Food for You and Baby



CONNECT & PRACTICE

? ASK

Is a positive mealtime environment important to you? Why or why not?

SHARE

Trying new foods may take time – you may need to offer them to kids many times and in different ways. Though trying new foods can be difficult, be patient. It works better than pressure. As caregivers, you can use encouraging, positive words to gently guide kids. What you say has a big impact on kids' eating habits. And, we want children to listen to their own body cues of hunger and fullness, not to ignore those feelings to please us or to favor certain food groups over another.

TIP

Caregivers each bring their own food experiences. Draw on what has been positive, and consider how past food experiences may or may not be affecting what is eaten at mealtimes. Reflect together on participant responses. Consider that not everyone may feel comfortable with this conversation based on their life experiences. Be prepared if individuals choose to opt out of this conversation.



CONTINUE ON BACK →

? ASK

In what ways could you and your family create a positive mealtime experience?

SHARE

There are many ways to create positive mealtime environments for our families. You can help foster positive eating habits among children by modeling positive attitudes and behaviors. As children watch and interact with you, they learn and form habits, attitudes and beliefs about food.

It's the job of the caregiver to plan and offer a variety of foods that the family can eat safely in a pleasant environment. It's the job of the child to eat the amount they need to grow into the body that is right for them.

SHARE

You can also model by:

- Eating the same foods as your children
- Talking positively about all foods
- Trying new foods
- Focus on body language (make eye contact, smile while eating, limit distractions)
- Not using food as rewards
- Minimizing pressure to eat, including commenting on how much or little is eaten

Discuss additional ways that parents can talk about food and behaviors in ways that promote a positive relationship.

CHANGE NEGATIVE OR UNHELPFUL PHRASES...		INTO POSITIVE, HELPFUL ONES!	
Avoid phrases that puts a desired food up against a less desired one.	“Would you like a banana or a bag of chips for a snack?”	Offer choices that are similar in type.	“Would you like the banana or apple as part of your snack?”
Avoid only offering one option.	“We’re having apples and milk for a snack.”	Give choices when possible.	“We’re having apples and milk for a snack. Do you want a whole apple or slices?”
Avoid phrases that teach children to ignore hunger and fullness cues.	“You can’t still be hungry!” “Just eat one more bite.”	Help children to tell when they are hungry or full.	“Is your stomach telling you you are full?” “Is your stomach still making its hungry growling noise?”

TIP**SHARE**

Pregnancy and parenthood can be a time to reflect on what you would like to see your family’s eating habits to be like. Discuss your thoughts with other caregivers.



SKILL 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7,
2.6, 3.4, 4.2, 4.4, 4.7,
4.10

Making Meals with Fruits, Vegetables & Whole Grains

GOAL: Parents and caregivers will gain confidence to include more fruits, vegetables and whole grains into their families' meals.

30-60

minutes **without**
recipe/food demo

- or -

45-60+

minutes **with**
recipe/food demo

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the pros and cons of fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables
- Discuss ways parents can serve a variety of foods many times that includes various textures, colors and preparation methods
- Practice identifying whole grain foods by reading label ingredient lists



EXPLORE THE HANDOUTS

SHARE & DISCUSS

- MyPlate Your Way
- Reading Food Labels
- Fresh, Frozen, Canned
- Fun with Fruits and Vegetables
- Great Whole Grains
- Veggie Appeal

CONNECT & PRACTICE

? ASK

What forms of fruits and vegetables do you and your family prefer? Why?



BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm a list of forms of produce (fresh, frozen, canned, dried). Prompt participants to consider factors like cost, storage, color, taste, texture, nutrient content and ease of preparation. Point out that by choosing fruits and vegetables as half of the foods we eat every day, we are able to get the nutrients our bodies need.

CONTINUE ON BACK →

TIP

SHARE

When choosing canned foods, use the nutrition label to find options that are lower in sodium and sugar. Draining and rinsing canned vegetables can cut the salt.



ASK

What successes have you had in getting your kids to try new foods? How do you get your kids to eat colorful fruits and vegetables?

SHARE

A caregiver's role is to help children learn new skills. Learning to taste and enjoy new foods is a skill worth working on. It can set a child up for success. The more times a child is offered a food, the more familiar it becomes. It can take many times before a child may be willing to eat and enjoy the food. Keep trying! This job as a caregiver takes patience.

SHARE

Talk to children to help them understand when they are hungry and when they have had enough. The more your child and your family can listen to hunger and fullness cues, the less you as a caregiver need to worry about exact portion sizes. It's the job of caregivers to plan and offer a variety of foods that the family can eat safely in a pleasant environment. It's the job of the child to eat the amount they need to grow into the body that is right for them.

SHARE

Prepare and serve fruits and vegetables in or with every meal. It can make kids more familiar with those foods over time. You can use tools like MyPlate as you plan and serve meals. Depending on the meal, these foods can be mixed together with other ingredients, like in stews or one-pot dishes, or kept separate, depending on how your family serves meals.

Use the table to address common challenges to making meals with fruits and vegetables. Allow caregivers to offer each other ideas to overcome those challenges.

MANY WAYS TO EAT MORE COLORFUL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
The texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For crunchy foods, serve cooked by steaming or roasting until it can be mashed with a fork. For mushy foods, try adding to a smoothie or make into a dipping sauce or add to a stew. Add crunch by including chopped nuts or dry cereal on smoothies or bread crisps with stews.
The flavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have some condiments that can be added. Add a zesty squeeze of lemon or lime, a sour and salty splash of vinegary pickle juice, a spicy hot sauce, or the tart tanginess of mustard. You can also offer yogurt-based dips, hummus or salad dressing.
My child doesn't like foods mixed together on the plate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try offering the components of the meal separate, but also offer a serving or taste of the food combined. Try meals that have a uniform texture like pureed soups, or similar colors such as adding mashed fruits like bananas to muffins.
I only buy the fruits and vegetables I know my family will eat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you can, buy a small amount of one unfamiliar fruit or vegetable for your family to try and work your way through the colors of the rainbow. Experiment with different cooking methods and let each family member try a taste.

? ASK

What are some grains you've heard of? Which kinds do you and your family choose? How can you tell if a grain food is a whole grain?

SHARE

Grains are an important part of the foods we eat. Many families have grains they are very familiar with and are the base of nourishing meals. Grains are an important part of meals and help us feel satisfied, especially when combined with other foods.

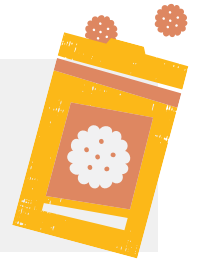
SHARE

Some grains are whole grains, and some are not. In a whole grain, all the parts of the kernel are included. Many nutrients found in grains keep our bodies working well, help us feel full longer, and reduce our risk for some diseases. These are found in the whole kernel. When grains are refined, some of these important nutrients are removed in processing — meaning refined grains, especially packaged foods containing grains, are missing some of those important nutrients.

Using a grain food package as an example, show parents how to look for a whole grain word as the first ingredient in the ingredient list. Ingredients used in the greatest amount are listed first and go down in order by those in smaller amounts. Point out that in addition to looking at the ingredient list to identify whole grains, parents can use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient list to choose whole grain options that are higher in fiber and lower in added sugar and sodium.

TIP**IMPLEMENT**

Have caregivers pair up and look at various grain ingredient lists to see if they can find the whole grain foods. See if they can find foods that have at least 20% or more of the Percent Daily Value (%DV) per serving for fiber!

**SHARE**

Enjoy all grains. Aim to make half of your grains throughout the day whole grains. Pair refined grains with other foods like fruits, vegetables and protein foods to boost the overall satisfaction and nutrition of the meal or snack.

ACT

What did we discuss today that you think may work at home? Why?

Notes



Build Meal Habits at Home

GOAL: Parents and caregivers will gain confidence to prepare more meals at home.

30-60

minutes **without**
recipe/food demo

- or -

45-60+

minutes **with**
recipe/food demo

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss solutions for making and eating meals at home together more regularly
- Practice making choices when eating convenience foods or eating away from home
- Discuss strategies to select food that limits saturated fat and replaces with unsaturated fats

EXPLORE THE HANDOUTS

SHARE & DISCUSS

- Make Meals Fast
- Package Food Makeover



CONNECT & PRACTICE

? ASK

What are common breakfast choices for your family? Lunch? Dinner?

BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm common, at-home meal choices for families. Identify any common themes across ideas (e.g. less than 30-minute meals, common ingredients or cooking methods like one-pot meals).

SHARE

Any foods can be eaten at any meal of the day (ex. foods like egg dishes for dinner or homemade pizzas for breakfast).

? ASK

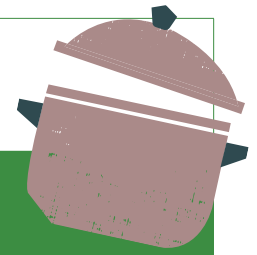
When it comes to eating meals regularly throughout the day, what challenges or barriers do you face?

DISCUSS

Discuss reasons why caregivers may not regularly eat meals throughout the day and develop solutions.

CONTINUE ON BACK →

IDEAS FOR MORE COOKING AND EATING AT HOME



CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
I don't have enough time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal planning can help save time when it's time to make meals, because it takes the guesswork out of what to make. Finding a time in your schedule when you have an hour or so to do some meal prep, like chopping vegetables or pre-cooking grains, can help get the meal done more quickly. Cooking tools like slow cookers or pressure cookers can also do the cooking work while you're doing other things. Leftovers are great timesavers, too!
I'm just not hungry at that time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes depending on how close your last meal was, you may not be hungry. Try to limit snacks or sweetened beverages in between meals. You may feel yourself getting hungry after 3-4 hours. But listen to your body. Kids need smaller, frequent meals, so plan some sit-down meals and snacks.
It's hard to eat a meal when my kids are eating because I am focused on getting things done while they are sitting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children benefit from the social aspect of having a caregiver focused on the meal with them. Kids will also have an easier time listening to their hunger and fullness if they are being engaged at mealtime. Cleaning up as you cook helps clean-up at the end of a meal go faster and gives you more time to enjoy a meal together. If able, make sure everyone has a job in cleaning up, too! Have children bring plates to the sink or wipe down and sweep the eating space.
I'm not home much during the week and I can't make meals at home every night. Instead, I do takeout or eat at a restaurant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you eat out, look for meals that have fruits, vegetables and whole grains in them. Choose water or limit sugar-sweetened beverages, and order a single or smaller portion when you can. Many convenience-food favorites can be made at home. When making meals at home, you can tailor to your family's preferences by choosing ingredients they enjoy (ex. a toppings bar for homemade pizzas or tacos). This is also a great way to let kids practice making their own choices.



ASK

What kinds of convenience foods do you use to make meals quicker and easier?

TIP

SHARE

Convenience foods are any foods that save you time getting, preparing or cleaning up.



SHARE

Sometimes, we think of convenience foods from fast food restaurants, prepackaged meals or takeout. But convenience foods can also describe food items that are used to make meals at home and can make it quicker and easier. For example: precut and washed frozen fruits, bagged salads and other vegetables, canned fish and beans, or sauces and salsas.

BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm a list of other convenience foods that parents and caregivers can use to make easy, quick meals at home.

SHARE

Even though there is a wide variety of convenience foods that can be used to make quick, easy meals, some convenience foods can be high in sugar, salt and saturated fat. Use a mix of convenience foods to get a meal on the table fast. Try to include foods from a variety of food groups.

? ASK

What do you know about the fats we eat and how they are used in cooking?

SHARE

Fats that come from foods are important for our health. These are called dietary fats. Dietary fat gives us energy and helps us feel satisfied after we are done eating. Some dietary fat comes naturally in foods like nuts and meats. Other times, we may add fats like butter, lard or oil when frying, baking, sautéing or stir-frying.

Not all fats we eat have the same effects on our health. Dietary fats are made up of saturated fats and unsaturated fats.

Saturated Fats: These are found in foods with fats that are usually solid at room temperature. Too much of these can have a negative impact on health.

- Consider making versions of your favorite convenience or restaurant meals at home.
- When cooking, consider using vegetable oils in place of butter, coconut oil, lard, shortening, palm kernel and palm oil.

Unsaturated Fats: These are found in foods with fats that are usually liquid at room temperature: These are the healthier type of fats.

- Meals and snacks that include avocados, nut butters, fish, nuts and seeds are rich in healthy, unsaturated fats.
- Consider using vegetable oils when baking. About half of the oil called for in baking recipes can be replaced with pureed fruit like applesauce, banana or pumpkin.

TIP**SHARE**

Read the food label and compare to find a food package with less saturated fat. Look for ground meats with higher percent lean meat (90% vs. 80%). When preparing ground meat, add in one can of mashed brown or white beans. This will make more of the food and cut the overall cost.



If heart health is a concern of yours, talk to your doctor or a Registered Dietitian.

ACT

What did we discuss today that you think may work at home? Why?



Power of Planning

LESSON 4

SKILL 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.9

GOAL: Parents and caregivers will gain confidence to plan and prepare quick, budget-friendly, enjoyable meals at home.

30-60

minutes **without** recipe/food demo

- or -

45-60+

minutes **with** recipe/food demo

OBJECTIVES

- Use meal planning principles like using up items you already have, making a list, shopping with a list and planning meals in advance
- Practice ways to involve children in the meal planning strategies to create more buy-in at mealtime
- Use MyPlate as a guide for building meals

EXPLORE THE HANDOUTS

SHARE & DISCUSS

- Meal Planning Basics
- MyPlate Your Way
- Use the Food You Have



CONNECT & PRACTICE



ASK

Do you plan meals in advance? Why or why not?

Possible responses include:

- Save money (by avoiding unnecessary purchases, using up items you have and using ingredients across several meals)
- Eat better (by better using convenience foods, planning to include foods from all food groups, and avoiding impulse buys)
- Save time (sets the expectations for what meals the family will have, helps make grocery shopping easier)



ASK

What meal planning strategies do you use? What are the benefits and challenges?

Address caregivers' common meal planning challenges and let them offer each other solutions, using the table on the following page as needed.

CONTINUE ON BACK →

MEAL PLANNING SOLUTIONS



CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
I'm short on time. It feels like one more thing to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal planning does take time up front – but it pays off big time throughout the week. Spend 15-30 minutes meal planning. Find a regular time each week when you know you'll have the time and energy to tackle it. Write down the meal plan together and put it in a place where everyone can see it. Benefits of meal planning include fewer trips to the store, less arguing with kids, and less wasted time trying to figure out what you're going to feed the family.
My family's weeks are so busy and everyone is on a different schedule. It's hard to predict what future meals will require.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan ahead for busy schedules to avoid wasting food on meals if only half the family will be there to eat it. You also avoid the stress of the last-minute scramble coming up with meal ideas each day.
My kids are picky eaters and another caregiver in the house has dietary issues, so it's hard to plan one meal we all can agree on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for each person's preferences. This can create buy-in. It gives you an opportunity in advance to plan a single core meal (like tacos) that can be adapted at the table to suit individual tastes (like adding or leaving out certain toppings). Plus, satisfied eaters will waste less food, which is money saved.

? ASK

What do you consider when choosing foods for your family?

Show MyPlate image and discuss MyPlate as a guide for building meals.

SHARE

You can use the MyPlate image as a framework to be tailored to your individual needs and preferences. You can think of MyPlate as each meal or what your family eats over the course of a day or a week. MyPlate is a symbol that helps remind us how to build meals that work for you and your family— not an exact replica of our plate at each meal. When choosing foods, think about:

- Your family's preferences
- What you can find at the store
- What will be covered by SNAP or WIC benefits
- What is on sale
- What you can stretch across multiple meals
- What's available locally

? ASK

What foods do you try to keep on hand for family meals?

SHARE

When planning meals, start with just a concept or idea. Think about what you may already have to use.

Shopping on a Budget

GOAL: Parents and caregivers will gain confidence to implement a shopping strategy and obtain foods within their budget and preferences.

30-60
minutes **without**
recipe/food demo

- or -

45-60+
minutes **with**
recipe/food demo

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss ways to use available food resources
- Compare unit prices when purchasing food
- Discuss ways to engage kids in age-appropriate activities when shopping for food
- Read and compare food labels to find foods that are nourishing, enjoyable and safe
- Identify how planning strategies can make obtaining food quicker and easier



EXPLORE THE HANDOUTS

SHARE & DISCUSS

- Compare Prices
- Reading Food Labels
- Shopping With Kids
- Fresh, Frozen, Canned
- Make Produce Last Longer

TIP

IMPLEMENT

This lesson can be enhanced by leading the discussion at a grocery store, using the talking points at the end of this lesson. Alternatively, you can prepare an assortment of food packages for comparing labels.

CONNECT & PRACTICE

ASK

What do you consider when you are shopping for and getting food?

SHARE

There are many ways in which families get and use their food resources including shopping for and buying foods at supermarkets, discount stores, convenience stores, markets, food pantries, ordering foods online and more.

CONTINUE ON BACK →

? ASK**What are ways to get the food you need with the food dollars you have?****DISCUSS**

Discuss what to consider when shopping or getting food. Possible factors may include:

- Amount of time available to go to a store or stores
- Availability of transportation
- What food may already be available or ready to eat
- Amount of money available to put toward groceries
- Whether or not to bring kids

TIP**SHARE**

Eligible families can use nutrition benefits like SNAP and WIC to supplement family food purchasing or get food from other sources like food pantries. When using WIC benefits, app-based resources and shelf tags can help make shopping easier and quicker.



Have caregivers discuss what a plan could look like that addresses the challenges that influence food shopping. Each person's plan will be very individualized based on their circumstances.

? ASK**What ideas do you have to save money on food?****SHARE**

There are tools available when shopping and getting food that can help shoppers make choices that work for their budget and their families. Caregivers can use the unit pricing tool to compare items of different sizes or brands of food and help to save money. Often, the unit price is found right on the shelf tag, listed separately from the retail price (the price you pay). Packaged foods that have been made more convenient (pre-washed, pre-cut or cooked) can cost more than their whole forms.

DISCUSS

Discuss when it would make sense to make these trade-offs.

BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm a list of forms of produce (fresh, frozen, canned, dried). Prompt participants to consider factors like cost, storage, color, taste, texture, nutrient content and ease of preparation.

SHARE

There is no "best" form of fruits and vegetables. All forms count toward your families' goals. Point out that if half of the foods we eat each day are fruits and vegetables, we are able to get the nutrients our bodies need within our budget.

SHARE

Food packages contain nutrition facts labels and ingredient lists to help consumers make choices. Ingredient lists help us to understand what the packaged food is made from. We can use the ingredient list in many ways:

- Identify whole grain foods
- See if extra ingredients like salt or sugar were added
- Compare food labels and ingredient lists
- Find allergens

Using a variety of food packages, compare labels and ingredient lists.

SHARE

When using food labels, look for foods that are lower in salt, saturated fat and added sugar and have more vitamins, minerals and fiber. Caregivers can use these tools to find nourishing, satisfying foods at the store or when comparing food items at home.

? ASK

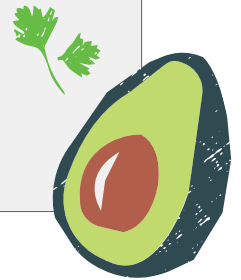
What strategies do you use before, during and after getting food that help you make the process quicker and easier?

SHARE

Making a plan can help shopping for and preparing food a little quicker and easier. Brainstorm strategies that could take 5 minutes or less to do:

MAKE SHOPPING AND PREPARING FOOD QUICKER & EASIER

BEFORE SHOPPING	DURING SHOPPING	AFTER SHOPPING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take inventory of what you need to buy and make a list. Be prepared to make substitutions based on availability. Review your family's upcoming weekly schedules and needs. Discuss as a family what kinds of meals and snacks they may enjoy and make a meal plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase fresh items based on when you may use them. Ex. buy less ripe avocados and let them ripen at home if you plan to use them later in the week. Use nutrition benefits like WIC or SNAP; consider coupons or coupon apps if you were planning to buy the items anyway. Have your child help find items needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store produce in ways to make it last longer. Arrange food in a way to use the oldest first, in order to minimize food waste.



If leading an in-store tour, use the talking points on the next page before wrapping up.

ACT

What did we discuss today that you think may work at home? Why?

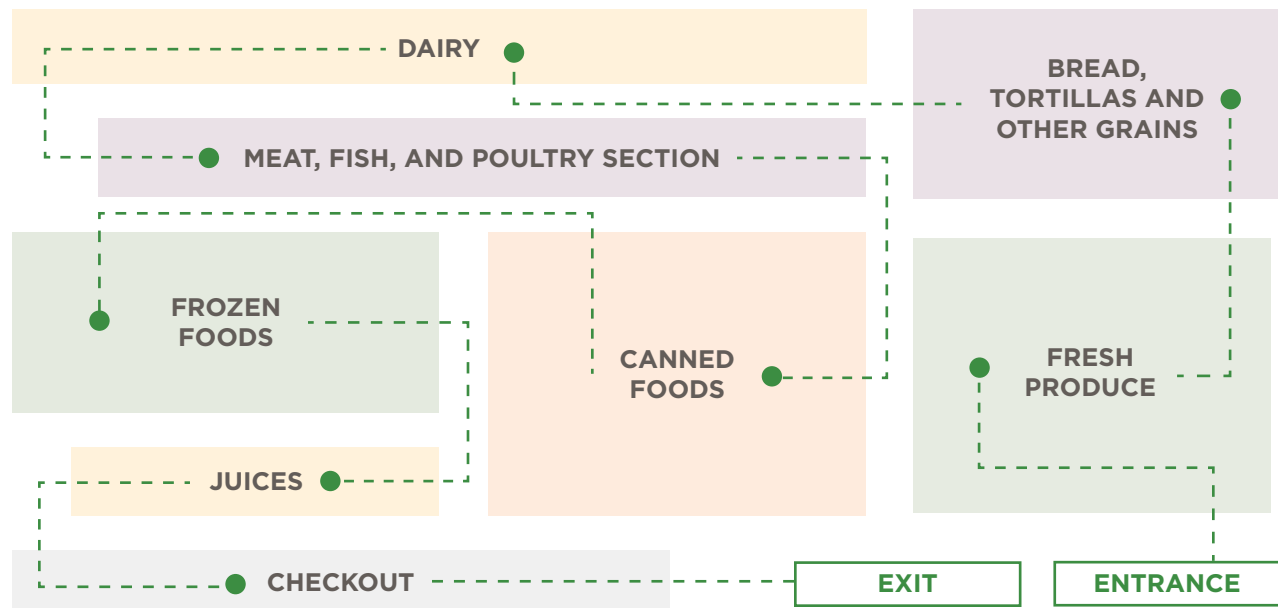
Notes

CONTINUE ON BACK →

Grocery Store Tips

This lesson can be enhanced by leading a physical tour of the food retail space most-frequented in your community. If you visit your local grocery store, corner store or farmers market, consider the following stops to highlight key points of this discussion. Share these strategies and tips for shopping for and buying nutritious foods on a budget.

Follow the natural flow of your grocery store when leading your tour.



CANNED FOODS



ASK

What do you look for on the Nutrition Label of canned foods?

Compare the labels of canned vegetables or fruits.

SHARE

When possible, look on the can for “low sodium” or “no salt added” canned veggies and beans. Look for fruits canned in juice instead of syrup.

SHARE

Canned foods like beans, lentils and seafood are budget-friendly, quick to serve and nutritious protein options.

Notes

TIP

SHARE

You can replace half the meat in tacos, soups, or other meals with beans.



BREAD, TORTILLAS AND OTHER GRAINS



ASK

What have you heard about whole grains? How can you tell if a food is a whole grain?

Compare ingredient lists to find whole grains, or packaged food grains to find ones with lower sugar.

SHARE

Packaged grain foods like cereal can make quick and easy meals and snacks. Use the nutrition facts label to compare sugar content. Find one with lower sugar that your family enjoys.

SHARE

Need a grain in less than 30 minutes? Try quick-cooking grains like parboiled rice, small whole grain pasta, oats, teff, amaranth or millet.

Notes

DAIRY



ASK

What dairy products does your family enjoy?

Compare dairy product labels for saturated fat and added sugar.

SHARE

Aim for a few servings of dairy or dairy alternatives each day. Include milk like low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese. Try lactose-free versions or fortified soy beverages and yogurt as alternatives.

Notes



FRESH PRODUCE



ASK

What kinds of fruits and vegetables do you usually buy? Are they fresh, frozen, or canned? Why do you typically use that form?

Compare the unit price costs of in-season versus out-of-season produce.

SHARE

Fresh produce has the best price and taste when it is in season. When it is out of season, try the ready-to-eat canned or frozen versions.

Compare the unit price costs of pre-cut versus whole form produce or single versus bulk.

SHARE

Convenience forms of produce (like bagged salad or pre-cut carrots) can cost more than the whole forms (like a head of lettuce or whole carrots). If you need a time-saver, try a convenience form. If you have some time and want to save money, try the whole form.

Notes

CONTINUE ON BACK →

JUICES

Find the % juice on a food label. Find items that are 100% juice.

SHARE

Juices labeled 100% juice are real fruit juices. Other juice drinks contain added sugar.

Notes

TIP

Choose to serve and drink water when you can. For kids, you can flavor water with a splash of juice.



FROZEN FOODS

? ASK

Which fruits or vegetables do you like to purchase frozen?

Compare the unit price costs of frozen produce to fresh.

SHARE

Frozen produce can be a budget-friendly option when that item is not in season. Frozen produce is especially good when introducing new foods to babies as you can take only what you need.

Compare the labels of frozen produce to canned.

SHARE

Check the ingredient list to be sure the product includes only the frozen food and not extra salt, fat or sugar.

Notes

MEAT, FISH, AND POULTRY SECTION

? ASK

What types of protein foods does your family eat?

Read the food label and compare to find a food package with less saturated fat.

SHARE

Look for ground meats with higher percent lean meat (90% vs. 80%). Swap higher fat meats for leaner choices like chicken, fish, turkey or non-meat proteins like beans, lentils and soy products like tofu.

SHARE

Convenience forms of animal foods will usually cost more (e.g. premade patties vs. ground beef).

Notes

Drink to Your Health



GOAL: Parents and caregivers will gain confidence to serve beverages with less sugar, including water, to their families.

30-60
minutes **without**
recipe/food demo

- or -

45-60+
minutes **with**
recipe/food demo

OBJECTIVES

- Practice identifying added sugar in foods and drinks using the food labels
- Discuss ideas for how to offer more water to children and limit beverages with added sugar

EXPLORE THE HANDOUTS

SHARE & DISCUSS

- Be a Sugar Detective
- Reading Food Labels



CONNECT & PRACTICE

? ASK

What do you know about what we need to drink each day?

SHARE

Water is the most important nutrient we take in our diets. Water makes up about 60% of our body and even more of a child's body.

SHARE

The main reason we drink beverages is to hydrate, or make sure our bodies get enough water. Water helps us carry nutrients and waste through the body, helps us maintain body temperature, and the body's blood volume. Kids need to drink water after play time, activities and sports. Water is the best choice for replacing the fluids kids lose when being active.

SHARE

All foods contain water. Some have more water than others, like fruits, vegetables, soups and beverages. Some of these items, especially beverages, have sugar added to them. There could be various causes to early tooth decay and cavities, but too many sugar-sweetened foods and drinks over time can lead to these.

TIP

SHARE

Babies get all their hydration through breastmilk and/or formula until about 6 months, when you can offer small amounts of water. Small amounts of water can be introduced when you start feeding your baby solid foods. Wait until your baby is at least a year old to introduce cow's milk and juice.



CONTINUE ON BACK →

? ASK**What kinds of food usually contain added sugar?****SHARE**

Foods high in added sugar include sugar-sweetened drinks, candy, cookies, cakes and ice cream. Other clues that foods may have added sugars include words like “flavored” or “syrup” as in flavored yogurt or canned fruit in syrup. Many prepackaged convenience foods like pizza, sauces, bottled salad dressings and crackers may also have added sugar. Use the label to find swaps lower in added sugar.

SHARE

Plan to only offer beverages like milk and juice at meal and snack times. Kids can fill up fast on drinks like juice, milk and sweetened beverages between meals and not be hungry at the next mealtime. Water can be offered throughout the day.

? ASK**How can you tell which drinks have more sugar than others?****SHARE**

You can use the nutrition label and ingredient list to tell if beverages have added sugar.

PRACTICE

Practice identifying added sugar in foods and drinks using the food labels. Compare labels of various popular beverages, especially those typically offered to kids (e.g., juice, sports drinks, fruit-flavored “juices,” flavored milks, etc.). A bottle or package of juice, soda or flavored water often contains more than one serving per bottle. You can even measure out sugar to visually show how much is in each container. Discuss what parents learned by comparing labels.

TIP**IMPLEMENT**

Don't forget to bring an assortment of food packages for comparing labels.

**SHARE**

Most of the added sugar comes from sugar-sweetened drinks, but there are other foods that contain added sugar.

? ASK**What other foods have added sugar?****SHARE**

Many foods can have added sugar. Use the food label to see if your foods have added sugars. Common foods with added sugar include desserts, candy and sweet snacks. Sugar is also found in cereals, flavored yogurts, prepared meals and breads.

? ASK**How can you and/or your kids drink water or other healthy beverages more often?****DISCUSS**

Discuss ways to offer more water to drink. Possible responses include:

- Choose tap water over bottled water when you can.
- Flavor tap water with fresh fruit slices or fresh herbs like mint or basil.
- Make fruit fizz with seltzer or sparkling water and a splash of juice.
- Add less sugar to drinks like coffee and tea.
- Mix water with juice or fruit-flavored juices. Over time, gradually increase the amount of water in the mixture.
- Make fun ice cubes with kids that have a little lemon or lime juice and some frozen berries. They look great and add interest to water.
- Freeze water with a splash of juice into popsicle molds for a cool treat.
- Use a special cup or water bottle to encourage regular water drinking.
- Offer whole fruits when you can.

? ASK

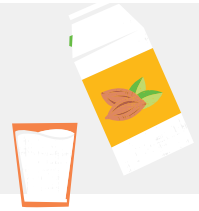
Besides water, what other drink choices are nutritious choices for kids?

SHARE

Plain milk can be a nutritious choice for children if they tolerate it. Offer the right type and amount of milk for your child's age. Limit the amount of flavored milk you offer.

TIP**SHARE**

Low-lactose and lactose-free dairy products can be an alternative to plain cow's milk. If choosing alternative milk beverages like soymilk, look for those that are fortified with calcium, vitamin A, vitamin D, and without added sugar.

**SHARE**

100% juice is a juice with no added sugar. You can see if a juice is 100% juice with no added sugar. This can be found on the food label directly above the Nutrition Facts panel. Juice can provide key nutrients, but keep total juice amount to less than ½ cup per day.

? ASK

What behaviors can parents and caregivers practice to encourage smart beverage choices?

- Practice the habits you wish to see your children practice. If kids see you drinking and enjoying more water yourself, they'll get the message that water is your preferred drink choice.
- Save your favorite sugar-sweetened beverages for special occasions, like birthday parties or long road trips.

ACT

What did we discuss today that you think may work at home? Why?

Notes
