

Week 4: Happy Meals



Step of the Week

This week's lesson is to help your family:

1. Learn what types of foods make a healthy meal
2. Identify what food groups make a balanced meal
3. Understand food portion sizes



Did You Know?

- The best diet is one that has a mix of vegetables, grains, protein, dairy and fruits (the five food groups)
- Cooking homemade meals is generally a healthier choice, however busy families can still balance meals with quick options, such as instant rice or frozen vegetables
- Small changes to create more balanced plates at meal times add up over time

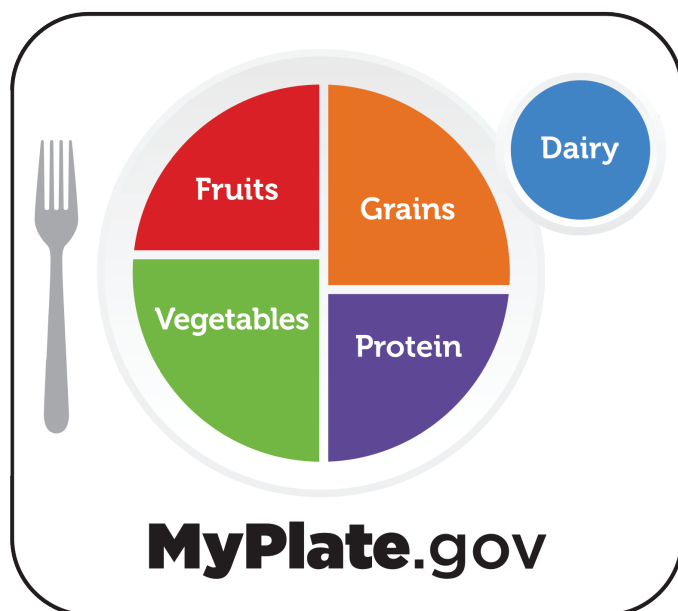
Myth vs. Fact

Myth: High calorie foods are bad for you.

Fact: Calories are what makes us full and give us energy to play! We should focus more on eating a balance of foods from each of the five food groups. Reading the serving size on a nutrition label can also help us from eating too many calories in a day.

Myth: It does not matter how many meals a day you have.

Fact: Eating three square meals a day has been found to effectively reduce hunger. Healthy snacks in between are also okay!



Family Learning and Fun:

Try drawing a meal you enjoy using this chart from MyPlate.gov! Make sure to include all five food groups needed for a healthy, balanced meal. Use a quarter of your plate for protein, another quarter for starches and grains, and half the plate for fruits and veggies. You can either print out the worksheet from the website, or draw your own. Now, make that meal with your family.

Serving Sizes vs. Portion Sizes

It is important to know that *portion sizes* are how much you CHOOSE to eat, which could be more or less than a serving size for that particular food.

Serving sizes are a standard, recommended amount for the average person. They should be considered as starting points, **not** rules for how much of something you should eat. **You can find the serving size under the Nutrition Facts label on the back of most food products.**

Recommendations can vary by age and appetite. It is important to eat until you are satisfied, but not too much that you overeat.

Everyone, hold out your hand and clench your fist. Did you know your stomach is about the same size? It only takes a handful of food to fill your stomach. During meal times or snacking, try to measure out food according to your fist or start with a small plate. If you are still hungry after finishing the food, it is okay to eat more! An overall balanced meal with the five food groups is what is important!



Grains:

- Bread or tortilla
- Cooked pasta, rice, or other grains
- Cereal
- Crackers

Protein:

- Eggs
- Cooked dry beans, peas or lentils
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Hummus
- Nut butter

Dairy:

- Milk
- Cheese
- Cottage cheese or yogurt

Fruits & Vegetables:

- Leafy greens, carrots, cooked sweet potatoes
- Strawberries, blueberries, apples
- 100% fruit juice.
- Dried fruits (almonds, walnuts, apricots)

Try to prepare snacks and meals using the recommended serving size for your age. If you need a little more, or cannot eat the whole serving, that is okay! We are learning to balance our plates.

Source: <https://www.mjandhungryman.com/recommended-toddler-serving-sizes-with-visuals/>

Stop light method

Let's think about food like stoplights:

- **RED** means eat rarely,
- **YELLOW** means eat sometimes, and
- **GREEN** means eat often.



Let's Chat!

What surprises you about the portion sizes? _____

What food groups is your family struggling with? Succeeding with? _____

What did you learn about portion sizes? _____

Did you realize anything about your eating habits at meals? _____

Do you find that you eat too much or too little of any of the food groups at a meal? _____

Ideas for Change

- Measure out snacks based on the portion size. You can do this ahead of time so that on busy days you can grab a snack and go!
- Serve meals on smaller plates. After finishing the plate, ask yourself if you are hungry or satiated. If you want more, it is okay to go for seconds or opt for fruits and veggies.
- Add salad or fruit to the beginning of meals to help with controlling hunger or feeling full.
- Have mealtimes with the entire family. Don't rush through eating. Take your time and allow everyone to feel full before going for seconds.
- It's okay if your child doesn't finish their plate. Allow them to listen to their hunger-satiety cues. If they do not want the food, save it for later.
- Try cutting up and washing vegetables ahead of time so they are easy to eat or take to go.
- When meal prepping, separate out the portions ahead of time into smaller containers and then store in the fridge/freezer. That way it is already portioned and easy to grab and eat.
- If possible, visit <https://www.doctoryum.org/> for balanced meal ideas, a recipe creator, and a family meal planner (this will help make healthy meals easier).

Making a Change

- Add a fruit or vegetable at every meal.
- Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner with a healthy snack between lunch and dinner.
- Follow suggested portion sizes on nutrition labels. Again, these are just starting points. Listen to your body. If you want more after, it is okay!
- Try to incorporate all five food groups at each meal.
- Instead of eating straight from the package, put snacks into a small bowl. It can be easy to overeat when we are preoccupied with watching TV or with work.
- Try not to put serving dishes on the table during mealtimes. Serve directly on individual plates as this will decrease the chances of reaching for second or third helpings.
- Keep tempting foods such as cookies and chips out of sight. Move them to a high shelf or behind other food items. Instead, move the healthier items up front, so that it is easy to reach.

Taking a Step

What is one small change you think your family can make and stick to for the next week?

Pledge: What's our little step for this week?

We pledge that we will do our best to stick to this little step for our health this week:

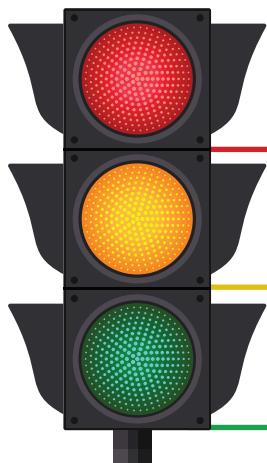
sign your name(s) on the line

End of Week Check In!

- Were you able to incorporate the 5 food groups into your meals?
- What were some changes you were able to make to each meal to make it more balanced?
- Did you like the healthier plates that you tried?
- Were there any new foods that you tried that you really liked?
- Were you able to eat a fruit or vegetable at each meal, or swap out snacks?

Looking Back!

Last week, we talked about intuitive eating. How did we do last week?



RED LIGHT

- ☐ I did not listen to my body and ate even when I was not hungry

YELLOW LIGHT

- ☐ I listened to my body sometimes but I can do better

GREEN LIGHT

- ☐ I listened to my body and stopped eating when I felt full
- ☐ When I felt hungry between meals, I chose fruits/veggies/protein as my snack

It's okay if you didn't quite hit your goal! Change isn't always easy. You just have to be proud of yourself for trying and remember that it's never too late to start again. If your goal was too hard last week, try making it a little bit easier this week. If it was a really big struggle, there are other resources outside of this program that can be found below to help you out a bit more!

List of resources for more information:

<https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/kids>

<https://www.doctoryum.org/>

<https://www.mjandhungryman.com/recommended-toddler-serving-sizes-with-visuals/>