



FAMILIES TACKLING TOUGH TIMES TOGETHER

Wellness Wednesday

What does science tell us are the health benefits of healthy eating? Both children and adults can gain benefits by taking a whole diet approach to good nutrition by eating foods from each of the five food groups: vegetables, fruit, whole grains, dairy, and protein while also limiting sugar. Having a healthy diet can help prevent many chronic diseases such as [obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and cancer](#). Learning to eat healthy as a child can have lifelong benefits and helps children grow and reduces their risk of obesity and other chronic diseases. Also, research suggests that natural healthy eating during a chaotic or challenging time can have a positive effect related to [stress and anxiety](#).

Healthy Eating

For many of us, it is hard to keep the same routines during challenging times and that can make preparing meals and eating healthy more difficult. Trying to keep a daily schedule and [routine](#) for meals and snacks can help you and your family stay grounded and more aware of how much and what you are eating throughout the day.

Healthy Eating Tips

- Involve the whole family in meal planning and cooking. Working together on picking recipes, creating shopping lists and cooking can strengthen connections and can help encourage family members to try new foods. [Research](#) shows that involving children in the process may increase how many vegetables they eat and foster positive feelings around mealtime.
- [Try to eat fruits and vegetables of all different colors](#). You could create a family challenge to see how many colors you can include in meals for the week.
- Eat less fried foods, processed foods and foods high in sugar, try to incorporate whole foods as much as possible. If you are doing your own shopping, you can help remind yourself by shopping the edges of the grocery store where most of the fresh and minimally-processed foods can be found.
- If you live with other people, try to eat at least one meal together per day, it can help you feel less isolated and build connections. Is there a set location in the home for the family meal, a gathering spot?
- Incorporate protein into every meal to help reduce blood sugar spikes. Protein sources include eggs, meat, fish, nuts, cottage cheese, milk, avocados, and beans.
- Focus on using healthy fats while cooking and in meal planning such as olive oil and cold-water fish like salmon. These fats have been shown to be [good for the brain](#).

Eating healthy is fuel for the body but also the brain. If you are having a hard time affording food, or if you are concerned you might, [seek assistance](#).

Dimensions of Wellness Related to Healthy Eating

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social (for meals with family and friends)
- Spiritual (for holiday or family celebrations)
- Intellectual

