

Cooperative Extension



Eat a Rainbow of Color Every Day

Marilou Rochford, MA, CFLE, Family & Community Health Sciences Educator, Cape May County

Most Americans know that fruits and vegetables are important to a healthy diet but studies indicate that many Americans do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables and fruits each day. In the 2010 State of the Plate report issued by the Produce for Better Health Foundation, only 6% reached the target for vegetables and 8% for fruit in an average day. While some groups of adults have started to increase their fruit intake and a few have increased vegetables, the report indicated that older adults are eating less fruit and vegetables. Those over age 65 have decreased their intake nearly 10% less than 2004 levels. Consuming fruits and vegetables helps reduce the risk of chronic illnesses like diabetes, cancer and heart disease and aids in weight management too. The risk of developing these diseases increases as we age, but it is never too late to lower your risk.



On June 2, 2011 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) replaced its My Pyramid icon with the new MyPlate icon. It supports the recommendations from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables than any other group. One of the key concepts of MyPlate is to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. This includes 100% juice, fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables. How many fruits and vegetables do we need? The answer is half your plate!

Here are a dozen ways to help you include fruits and vegetables in your daily diet.

1. Start dinner with a green salad or bowl of vegetable soup.
2. Add fresh fruit like blueberries or sliced bananas to plain yogurt for breakfast or a snack.
3. Keep a container of grape tomatoes or cut up carrots, celery, peppers, cucumbers, or broccoli, in the refrigerator for snacks or to add to lunch.
4. Try a "Meatless Monday" and sample some new veggie dishes.
5. Have your kids select the family fruits and vegetables for the week. Make each day a different color.
6. Instead of crackers try a snack of apple slices or carrot sticks with peanut butter dip.



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Enjoy the Leftover Food, and Not Leftover Bacteria

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As we prepare for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, many of us look forward to good company and good food. Some of us (including the authors of this article) particularly look forward to many days of leftover turkey, stuffing, and gravy placed between leftover bread to make the perfect leftover sandwich. As always, careful food handling can go a long way to make your food more safe, and have better quality! When it comes to proper food safety for leftovers, the two most important factors are cooling and reheating.

As soon as a food is removed from the oven, it begins cooling. Once the food begins to cool, some spore-forming bacteria (like *Clostridium* and *Bacillus*) that may have survived the cooking process can begin to grow and multiply. The first defense against foodborne pathogens is to hold hot foods at or above 140° F, or promptly (within 2 hours) cool and refrigerate the food. All foods should be put in shallow containers (2 inches deep or less are best), to quicken and maximize the cooling rate. The faster the food is cooled, the safer it will be. Remember to plan ahead, and do not over pack your refrigerator, which can slow the cooling of hot foods. In a pinch, if you have room in your home freezer, you can use the freezer to cool hot foods for an hour or two before transferring to the refrigerator.

Reheating leftovers thoroughly is the second line of defense in managing the safety of cooked foods at holiday time. Reheat all leftovers to at least 165° F and test with a clean thermometer to ensure safety. Leftover sauces and soups can be reheated to boiling on the stove, if a thermometer is not available. Microwave ovens are convenient and fast, but



may not heat foods evenly, even when equipped with an automatic turntable. If your microwave oven does not have a turntable, remove the food halfway through heating and thoroughly mix, before continuing. After heating, whether or not a turntable is used, let the food sit for 1-2 minutes to allow the heat to distribute evenly, and then mix again. All leftovers should be eaten, frozen, or thrown away within four days.

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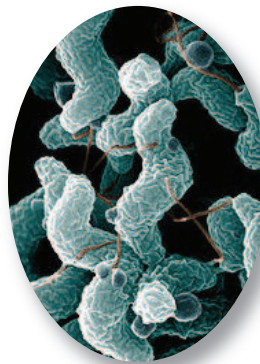
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Recontamination of cooked food can also occur if kitchen counter surfaces are not properly cleaned and sanitized. Bacteria like *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Staphylococcus* and *Listeria* can recontaminate cooked foods via dirty cutting boards, unwashed hands, and serving utensils placed on contaminated surfaces.

Cooking Safely With Kids

Karen Ensie EdD, RD, FADA, CFCS, Family & Community Health Sciences Educator,
Union County



Cooking with your child can be a wonderful tradition. As parents, we need to model safe behaviors. Before you decide to cook with your kids, make sure you follow these precautions, from the National SAFE KIDS Campaign in Washington, DC: <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/fire-burn-and-scalds/>

- **Keep a close eye on your child** at all times in the kitchen, even when the child is simply watching you do the work.
- **Never hold your child while cooking;** doing so can allow the child to reach dangerous electrical appliances and hot cookware.
- **Keep hot foods and liquids away from the edges** of counters and tables to make sure your child doesn't pull them down.
- **Put pans on back burners,** and turn all pot handles toward the back of the stove so your child can't reach them.
- **Don't let kids under 10 handle the stove, electrical appliances, sharp utensils, or hot dishes.** Instead, give them safer tasks such as washing fruits and vegetables and stirring ingredients in a bowl.
- **Have a fire extinguisher nearby** and emergency phone numbers posted in a conspicuous place so you can make calls quickly.

Cooking with your young child can be a valuable learning experience because, at this age, they want to be a good helper. Here are some cooking tasks that children can begin to help with:

- **choosing what to make**
- **getting out all the ingredients**
- **preparing all the utensils**
- **evening cleaning up will be fun.**



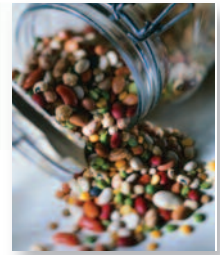
Immature fine motor skills can limit some of the actual cooking tasks, but they can learn the basics of measuring along with rolling dough, spooning mixtures, and tasting the prepared food which can be very exciting. Preparing food with your children is a great teachable moment for kids to learn how eating healthy foods help to build strong bodies, while teaching and modeling can give them lessons that will last a lifetime. Here are some suggestions of foods that kids love to prepare:

- **Muffins.** Blueberry, apple and banana are popular flavors, or try cheese, pumpkin or carrot.
- **Pizza.** You can make the base from scratch or cheat with a pre-made base. Lay out all the topping choices and let him/her make personal choices on their "super pie".
- **Biscuits.** Let kids stamp out shapes or cut (with a plastic knife) freeform shapes.
- **Fruit smoothies.** Help him/her drop some fruit, milk, or yogurt in a blender, and let them hit the START button!
- **Mashed potatoes or squash.** Let him/her have a turn with the masher.

Start teaching your child now how to set the table, clear the table, serve food and clean up! If they learn this early, these habits will last a lifetime. Parents who take the time to teach these valuable lessons will reap the benefits over time; kids will be healthy and know how to cook safely in the kitchen.

Beans: A Good Source of Fiber and Protein

Maria C. Young, MS, Family and Community Health Sciences Educator, Passaic County



Hearty and economical, beans have been a staple in human diets for thousands of years. Beans are no longer considered “a poor man’s meat”. Dry beans are a nutrient dense food and are included in two food groups. They are high in complex carbohydrates, protein, dietary fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. Beans are low in sodium, as well as, in calories and they do not contain cholesterol.



Beans are also low in cost and one pound of dry beans will provide you with 5 to 6 cups of cooked beans. A 15.5 to 16 oz. can of drained beans will yield 1 2/3 cups. Research on the consumption of beans indicates that the phytochemicals in beans may decrease the risk of colorectal cancer. The fiber in beans helps lower cholesterol levels and improves heart health. In April 2009, The American Diabetes Association developed a Diabetes Super Food List and listed beans as number one because they have a low glycemic index. Clinical trials have demonstrated that including beans in meals may be one way to slow the rise in blood glucose after eating.

There are numerous ways to use beans. They can be added to soups, salads, pasta dishes, as well as pureed into spreads and dips. Pureed beans can also be used to reduce the fat in baked goods. Barry G. Swanson, Ph.D., Professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Washington State University in Pullman stated; “using pureed legumes as a fat replacement helps to boost the nutrition of a baked product. The combination of beans and sugar creates the mouth feel of a full-fat product. Some possible combinations for baked foods are black bean puree in brownies, chocolate cake, and mocha cake. A white bean or northern bean puree can be used in chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies.

Here are two creative and tasty suggestions on how you can add beans to your meals:

Black Bean Pasta

- 1 lb Whole Wheat, Rainbow, or Rotini pasta
- 26 oz jar of low sodium pasta sauce
- 1 cup cooked black beans, drained
- 3 tomatoes, diced

Cook pasta according to the package directions and drain. Place in a microwave safe container and add sauce, beans, and tomatoes.

Microwave on high for 6 minutes or until thoroughly heated. (cooking time may vary according to size/wattage of oven). Serve hot or chill and serve as a pasta salad. Serves 8

Serving size: One cup

Per Serving: 274 calories, 1g fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 55g carbohydrates, 5g fiber, 10g protein

Black Bean Brownies

- Canola Spray
- 1 can (15oz) reduced-sodium back beans, rinsed and drained
- 3 large eggs
- 3 Tbsp. Canola oil
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 Tbsp. Vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 3 Tbsp. Bittersweet or dark chocolate chips



Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Coat an 8-inch baking pan with canola oil spray. In food processor, place beans, eggs, canola oil, cocoa powder, salt, vanilla and brown sugar and blend until smooth. Remove blade and carefully stir in chocolate chips. Transfer mixture to prepared pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until a clean dry knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool before cutting into squares. Serves: 16 (1 brownie)

Per Serving: 110 calories, 5g total fat (1g saturated fat), 15g carbohydrates, 3g protein, 2g dietary fiber, 64mg sodium.

Parenting Tech Savvy Children

Joanne Kinsey M.S., CFCS, Family & Community Health Sciences Educator, Atlantic & Ocean Counties

Today's parents have their hands full when it comes to parenting their children regarding the use of technology. In fact, most parents are lacking the skills needed to stay one-step ahead of their tech savvy children. With technology changing rapidly, how can parents effectively monitor their child's online activities?



Parents can start by making sure there is open communication with their children about appropriate online etiquette and provide guidelines for children when searching online. If possible, parents should explore the use of software to restrict online searches on computers and other devices in the home. They need to set some family rules restricting the amount of time children are using a computer for communication and gaming. Screen time should be limited and carefully monitored by the parent or caregivers.



Since a number of hand-held online devices (iPads, iPod Touch, and Smart Phones) are popular with older children's on-line activities away from home, these devices can create difficulty for parents to monitor. One of the best defenses for parents is to talk to their children about limitations and then take time to monitor the children's use on the device with the child, on a regular basis. When children know their parents are monitoring their online behavior they are more likely to adhere to family rules.

Now is the 'teachable moment' to help your children practice online safety precautions. Be sure to follow these few guidelines:

- **Don't reply to text, email or popup messages** that ask for personal or financial information, and don't click any links in the message.
- **Don't give personal information** on the phone in response to a text message. Some scammers send text messages that appear to be legitimate.
- **Help children understand** that online actions have real-world consequences.
- **Review monthly connectivity bills** for unusual or unexplained purchases or data usage.
- **Protect your cell phone account** by placing a pin code on the account and auto lock it on your phone.
- **Create a strong password on email account** 10-12 characters (lower and upper case, letters and numbers)



For additional information about speaking to children about online safety go to the **OnGuardOnline** website (www.onguardonline.gov) for additional information and videos appropriate for families.

Beans: A Good Source of Fiber and Protein

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To enjoy beans without flatulence, change the water several times during the process of soaking the beans. Use fresh water to cook the beans. Cook the beans until they can be mashed with a fork. Canned beans can be used to save time. To reduce the salt, drain the beans and rinse them well.

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Shaping Jersey Kitchens: Pumping Up Family Meal Healthfulness

Carol Byrd-Bredbenner, PhD, RD, FADA, Nutrition Extension Specialist, Rutgers University



What's for dinner?? If you're like many households, you probably don't think about what to serve until it's nearly time to eat. Making healthy dining a priority doesn't mean spending hours in the kitchen or giving up favorite foods. But, it does mean making a plan.

Planning menus and making a shopping list sounds pretty old-fashioned to some and time-consuming to others—but it is essential to success. You could plan your family's dinner as you drive to work or take a shower each day or set aside time to make a weekly plan—use the method that fits your lifestyle!

Take Action: Making Healthy Meals a Priority

Start by thinking about the meals you prepared at home this week and why you chose those menus. How satisfied were you with their taste, preparation time, and healthfulness? Now, think about the changes you'd like to make.

Q. What do you want your meals to look like?

A. The healthiest meals emphasize grains, vegetables, and fruits—serve them in the greatest amounts. Meat portions should be smaller—this will save \$\$ and help keep saturated fat and cholesterol in check.

Q. How many options do you have on hand?

A. If you shop weekly and eat at home most nights, you should be able to visualize at least 5 dinners. Anything less and you are likely to resort to take-out more often than you'd like!

Q. In a rush?

A. Keep the menu simple! Feature one-dish meals like casseroles, stews, pizza, and sandwiches. To make one-dish meals complete, just add a beverage and maybe a simple side dish.

Quick & healthy side dishes

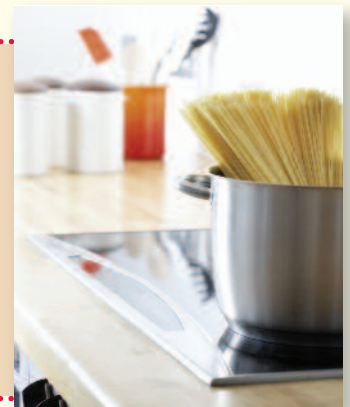
- salads
- vegetables (plain or with a simple dip)
- slices of whole grain bread or whole grain crackers
- instant brown rice

Set Some Goals

What are the top 3 changes that would do the most to pump up the healthfulness of your family's meals? What supplies do you need to make the changes? What strategies will you use to overcome barriers to shaping up your kitchen? Resolve to spend 10 minutes a day to reach your goals. Then, enjoy the benefits of the improvements.

Pasta Night!

- **Get Ready** - put a box of spaghetti, can of crushed tomatoes, pouch of clams, jar of dried oregano, and loaf of Italian bread in a basket.
- **Get Cooking** - grab the basket and get fresh parmesan cheese, low-fat salad dressing, and pre-cut salad mix from the fridge.
- **Save Time** - tuck the recipe in the basket! Just add a few instructions and your family can get started boiling the pasta water, opening the cans, grating the cheese, and setting the table.



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Easy, nutrient packed desserts

- canned peaches splashed with ice cold evaporated skim milk
- scoop of sorbet or just puree frozen fruit
- light ice cream, fat-free pudding
- orange wedges, sliced watermelon, or a dish of berries
- plain cookies

Fast, delicious beverages:

- lowfat milk
- chilled water with a slice of fruit or a dash of juice
- vegetable juices
- unsweetened teas



Time-saving ingredients

- Washed and pre-cut salad greens and salad bar ingredients
- Canned and frozen mixed vegetables save washing and chopping time for stir-frys and pizza toppings.
- Pureed canned beans make broths thick and creamy. Plus, they deliver lots of fiber and are almost fat free!
- Supermarket roasted chicken shaves an hour off cooking time.
- Store non-perishable ingredients for each meal in a bin.



Get your family on board for health-smart meals

Changes, even changes for the better, are hard for most people. Start small:

- switch from frozen pizza with the works to cheese pizza and top with chopped vegetables
- use quick-cooking brown rice instead of white rice.
- add tender young vegetables, like sugar peas and baby carrots, to the menu
- serve raw broccoli florets and sweet pepper strips with a low-fat dip
- slice up fruit and serve with low-fat coconut or lemon yogurt as a dip

Having a hard time coming up with meal ideas?

Ask your family and friends for suggestions. Or, try the Internet. Websites that can help are **mealtime.org** and **myrecipes.com**. Choose meals based on whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean protein, like tuna canned in water and skinless chicken.

Eat a Rainbow of Color Every Day

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7. Stock the freezer with bags of frozen veggies – they are easy to microwave or quickly steam for lunch or dinner.
8. Add chopped onion, broccoli and peppers to a jar of spaghetti sauce.
9. Place bananas, grapes and strawberries on a skewer and freeze for a “snack on a stick.”
10. For a fall - winter treat, roast chopped root vegetables in the oven with a little olive oil and fresh rosemary.
11. Order more vegetables and less cheese on your pizza.
12. For a sweet snack, choose chunks of whole fresh fruit instead of baked goods.

Vegetables and fruits are clearly part of a healthy diet. Remember, fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables and aim for variety. Eat a rainbow of color everyday. You will be on your way to eating well and healthy.

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