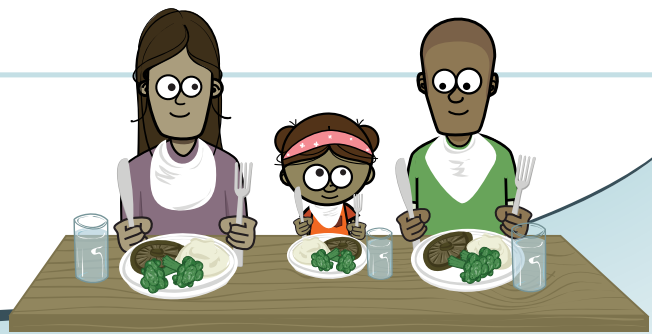


Eat Structured Meals and Snacks



Structured meals and snacks can help improve your family's eating habits. When you eat structured meals and snacks, you may be less likely to overeat, less likely to eat on the go, and more likely to include healthy choices like fruits and vegetables. Three meals and 1-2 snacks a day adds up to a healthier life for you and your family!

What does structured meals and snacks mean?

Eating structured meals and snacks means eating 3 meals and 1-2 snacks each day, and spacing meals and snacks out over regular time intervals. This will provide your body with a steady amount of fuel, which turns into energy to keep you running! Let your body tell you what you need – eat only when you are hungry.

Structured meals and snacks also means eating without distraction. That means eating with the television and computer off. If you are doing something else when you are eating, you may not pay attention to how much you eat.

Eat better together!

Families are busy with work, school and other activities, and it's sometimes hard to eat structured meals and snacks on a regular basis and as a family. But there are a lot of reasons to make eating regularly and as a family part of your day. Family meals support good life-long eating habits, and allow time to reconnect as a family. Eating structured meals and snacks makes you and your family:

- More likely to eat fruits and vegetables
- Less likely to snack on unhealthy food
- Less likely to use drugs or alcohol
- More likely to perform better in school

Eating structured meals and snacks is a healthy choice for you and your family. Making a change to your habits doesn't have to be drastic. Start with a small goal and build on it to make it last!

How can we Eat Structured Meals and Snacks?



Eating structured meals and snacks can help improve your family's health, but it can be hard to change your habits! Here are some tips to help get you started:

- Each family member should track his or her meals and snacks.
- Set a goal for yourself. Make sure it's reasonable and achievable. For example, if you never eat breakfast, aim to start the day with breakfast two days each week.
- Get the whole family involved in some friendly competition. Supporting each other's efforts will make it easier for everyone to do well.
- Use the diary in this packet to record your goal and track your progress. Make copies of the diary before you start so you'll have one for every week.

Making it easier to eat structured meals and snacks

These ideas will help you stay focused and achieve your goals. The easier it is for you to make good choices, the easier it will be to eat structured meals and snacks!

- Get started by making a family favorites list. What are your favorite family meals and what are some new foods you want to try?
- Plan meals and snacks ahead of time, and post a weekly menu on the refrigerator.
- Prepare some meals for the week on the weekend or whenever you have some extra time.
- Freeze soups, stews and casseroles; pre-cut fruits and vegetables for the week.
- Stock your kitchen with healthy foods you can make and serve quickly, like canned fruit without syrup/sugar, beans and frozen vegetables.
- Include no-cook meals when you're short on time. Salads with tuna (canned in water) or beans, cold sandwiches, raw vegetables and yogurt dip are good choices.

Track your progress and reward your family for a job well done!

To start eating structured meals and snacks, set your goal and go for it! Write your goal on the contract and use the diary to track your progress. Don't get discouraged if you don't meet your goal every day. Each day is a fresh start! Remember to reward yourself and your family for your efforts. Take a walk, play a game, read a book together. Celebrate your efforts and your success!