



# ESSEX COUNTY OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT

IN COLLABORATION WITH BLOOMFIELD DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## HEALTHY MONDAY'S TOOL KIT: OCTOBER 2024



900 Bloomfield Avenue  
Verona, NJ 07044

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## WHAT IS THE HEALTHY MONDAY CAMPAIGN?

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Even though we are encouraged to stay healthy every day. The healthy Monday campaign is Healthy Monday, a public health initiative that encourages individuals and organizations to commit to healthy behaviors every Monday to help prevent chronic diseases.

From the Essex County, Healthy Monday will focus on children and their parent and providing them with a toolkit every Monday that will focus on a different topics per month that are pertinent to children from K-12.

It is a well-known fact that 90% of the illnesses that affect children of school going age can be prevented through lifestyle change like getting the right amount of sleep, nutrition and so many others.

Welcome to the Essex County Healthy Monday Campaign for the month of September with Sleep being the main topic.

# LESSON 01: EATING AT THE APPROPRIATE TIMES

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Eating at the right time is very important for keeping to a good diet and improving your health in general. Here are some important things to think about:

1. **Mealtimes that you stick to:** Setting regular mealtimes can help control your hunger and fullness signals, which can help you avoid snacking or eating too much. Aim to eat at the same times every day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If you need to, you can eat healthy snacks in between.
2. **Balanced Meals:** When you plan your meals, make sure they have the right amount of carbs, protein, healthy fats, and fiber-rich foods. This well-balanced mix helps keep you energized, keeps your blood sugar levels in check, and makes you feel full and satisfied.
3. **Breakfast:** Eating a healthy breakfast within two hours of waking up speeds up your metabolism and gives you energy for the day. To fuel the body and help the brain work better, eat foods like veggies, whole grains, lean meats, and healthy fats.
4. **Lunch:** Aim to eat lunch in the middle of the day or early in the afternoon to keep your energy up and avoid getting tired in the middle of the afternoon. Pick foods that are high in nutrients, like salads, soups, whole grain sandwiches, or lean meats with veggies.
5. **Dinner:** Eat dinner a few hours before going to bed to help your body digest and keep you from being uncomfortable while you sleep. Choose meals that are lighter and better balanced, like those with lean meats, veggies, and complex carbs.
6. **Snacking:** If you get hungry in between meals, eat healthy snacks like nuts, whole grain bread, veggies, or vegetables with hummus. Instead of snacking on sugary foods, choose foods that are high in nutrients and give you energy that lasts.
7. **Water:** Drink water often throughout the day to stay refreshed. Aim to drink water before, during, and after meals to stay hydrated and help your body work right.
8. **Eating with Awareness:** Pay attention to your body's signals for when you're hungry or full and enjoy each bite while avoiding screens or work while you eat. Eating slowly and with awareness can help you avoid eating too much and digest food better.
9. **Pay attention to your body:** Each person has different energy and food needs, so it's important to pay attention to your body and eat when it's hungry. Don't skip meals or put off eating when your body tells you it's time.
10. **Setting a regular eating plan and sticking to it as much as possible** can help keep your metabolism, hunger hormones, and energy levels in check.



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# IT'S TIME TO EAT!

It is important to eat at the right times so you can grow healthy and strong!



Eat breakfast an hour after you wake up!

Hungry? Have a snack!



Have lunch 4 hours after breakfast!

Hungry? Have a snack!



Try to have dinner before 8pm!



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# Healthy Eating



Times



## **Breakfast**

Start your day off right by eating within 2 hours of waking up. It's time to break the fast!

Health is wealth

## **Lunch**

4 hours after breakfast try to have lunch. Include lean protein sources like poultry, fish, tofu, and beans. Limit red and processed meats.



## **Dinner**

Plan your dinner no later than 8 pm. Plan your meals to make healthier choices and avoid impulsive, less nutritious options.



# LESSON 02: THE PERFECT MEAL

There are several important reasons why kids should eat a healthy, well-balanced meal:

1. Helps with development and growth: Children's bodies are always changing and growing, and they need certain nutrients to keep this going. A well-balanced breakfast gives your bones, muscles, organs, and brain the vitamins, minerals, protein, and carbs they need to grow and develop normally.
2. Boosts the immune system- Kids' immune systems are stronger when they eat a lot of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. This makes it easier for them to fight off infections and sicknesses. Foods that are high in nutrients, like fruits, veggies, and lean meats, help your immune system work well.
3. Gives you energy: Kids are usually very busy, whether they're playing sports, running around at school, or doing something else. Meals with the right amount of carbs, protein, and healthy fats give them the energy they need to do their things and stay focused all day.
4. Helps the brain work properly Good diet is important for brain growth and brain function. Foods that are high in nutrients, like omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and B vitamins, can help your memory, focus, and general brain ability. This is very important for learning and doing well in school.

## LESSON 02: THE PERFECT MEAL

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5. Helps you keep a healthy weight: A healthy meal with a variety of nutrients that make you feel full helps control your hunger and keep you from eating too much. It also keeps you from eating too many empty calories from processed foods and sugary snacks, which can make you gain weight and become obese.

6. Makes you feel and act better: Nutrition is a big part of controlling your mood and how you act. Eating meals that are well-balanced with complex carbs, lean meats, and healthy fats can help keep blood sugar levels and neuron function stable. This can help reduce mood swings and make you more calm.

7. Helps you choose healthy foods: Kids will have healthy eating habits for a long time if they are exposed to a range of healthy foods early in life. Parents and other adults who care for kids can help them learn to like healthy foods and understand how important it is to make healthy choices by giving them balanced meals and snacks.

Overall, giving kids the best meal not only helps their health and growth, but it also sets them up for success and happiness in the future.

# TIPS FOR CREATING THE PERFECT MEAL

## AGES 5 -12

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- **Make It Colorful:** Use a variety of fruits and vegetables to create a visually appealing plate. Kids are often attracted to bright colors.
- **Keep It Simple:** Stick to familiar flavors and simple preparations. Think pasta with a mild sauce or grilled chicken strips.
- **Incorporate Fun Shapes:** Use cookie cutters to create fun shapes with sandwiches, fruits, or vegetables. This adds a playful element.
- **Interactive Meals:** Encourage kids to assemble their own tacos, pizzas, or wraps. This makes them more engaged in their meal.
- **Sneak in Nutrition:** Blend vegetables into sauces or smoothies, or add grated veggies to meatballs or muffins.
- **Balance:** Aim for a mix of proteins, whole grains, healthy fats, and lots of fruits and veggies. For example, a whole grain wrap with turkey, cheese, spinach, and sliced bell peppers.
- **Involve Them in Cooking:** Let kids help with age-appropriate tasks in the kitchen. It can make them more excited about the meal.

# TIPS FOR CREATING THE PERFECT MEAL

## AGES 12 AND UP

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- **Offer Variety:** Teenagers often appreciate a mix of cuisines and flavors. Consider international dishes like stir-fries, tacos, or sushi.
- **Focus on Nutrition:** They're growing and need energy. Include protein-rich foods, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates. Think grilled chicken, quinoa, and roasted veggies.
- **Healthy Snacks:** Incorporate nutritious snacks into meals, like hummus and veggies, yogurt with fruit, or nuts.
- **Presentation Matters:** Teens may be more influenced by how a meal looks, especially if they're sharing on social media. Try to plate dishes attractively.
- **Encourage Cooking Skills:** Teach them basic cooking techniques. Simple recipes can build confidence and encourage healthier eating habits.
- **Accommodate Dietary Preferences:** Be mindful of any dietary restrictions or preferences (vegetarian, gluten-free, etc.) and provide options.
- **Invite Friends Over:** Making meals a social occasion can encourage healthier eating habits. Consider having a themed dinner or a cooking night.

By tailoring your meals to the preferences and developmental stages of these age groups, you can create delicious, healthy, and enjoyable dining experiences!



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## Choosing The *Perfect Meal*

### **Colorful Veggies!**

Like the rainbow the more colors on your plate the more vitamins and minerals you intake!

### **Go Go Grains!**

Whole grains like wheat bread, brown rice, and quinoa can keep you on the go, go, go!

### **Healthy Brain Power!**

Avocados, nuts, and seeds have the ability to power up your brain!

### **Protein Power!**

Lean protein like turkey, chicken, fish, or beans can help you build strong muscles!



**Choosing the perfect meal will help you be the best you can be!**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Township of Bloomfield  
Department of Health



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## Choosing The *Perfect Meal*

### **Colorful Veggies!**

Each color correlates with a vitamin or mineral. Having more colors increases your nutrition intake

### **Energetic Grains!**

Whole grains like wheat bread, brown rice, and quinoa provide your body more fiber and energy for the day!

### **Healthy Brain Power!**

Avocados, nuts, and seeds are healthy fats that can improve the health of your brain!

### **Protein Power!**

Lean protein like turkey, chicken, fish, or beans can help you build and retain stronger muscles!



**Choosing the perfect meal will ensure you a healthy life!**

# LESSON 03: DRINKING WATER

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## The Importance of Drinking Water for Kids

Water is one of the most important substances on Earth. It is essential for all living things, including humans, to survive. For kids, drinking water is especially important for many reasons. Let's explore why water is so vital and how it helps children grow up healthy and strong.

### Why Do Kids Need to Drink Water?

#### 1. Hydration:

- Our bodies lose water every day through activities like sweating, urinating, and even breathing. To stay healthy, kids need to replace the water they lose by drinking enough each day.

#### 2. Energy and Focus:

- Staying hydrated helps kids maintain their energy levels and focus, especially during school and play. Dehydration can lead to feeling tired, cranky, and less able to concentrate on tasks.

#### 3. Healthy Bodies:

- Drinking water helps keep our skin looking good and our muscles working properly. It also helps prevent problems like constipation and kidney stones.

#### 4. Brain Function:

- Our brains are about 75% water, so staying hydrated helps with thinking, memory, and concentration. This is very important for kids who are learning new things every day.

# LESSON 03: DRINKING WATER

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## How Much Water Should Kids Drink?

The amount of water a child needs can vary based on their age, size, and activity level. Here are some general guidelines:

- Toddlers (1-3 years): About 4 cups of water a day.
- Young children (4-8 years): About 5 cups of water a day.
- Older children (9-13 years): 7-8 cups a day for girls and 8-10 cups a day for boys.

These amounts can be higher if kids are very active or live in hot climates.

## Tips for Drinking More Water

### 1. Carry a Water Bottle:

- Kids should carry a reusable water bottle to school or sports practice. This makes it easy to drink water throughout the day.

### 2. Make it Fun:

- Let kids choose a fun, colorful water bottle. You can also add slices of fruits like lemon, lime, or strawberries to the water for a tasty twist.

### 3. Set Reminders:

- Encourage kids to drink water at regular intervals, such as before, during, and after playing or studying.

### 4. Lead by Example:

- Kids often mimic adults. If they see parents and teachers drinking water regularly, they are more likely to do the same.

# LESSON 03: DRINKING WATER

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## What About Other Drinks?

While water is the best choice for staying hydrated, there are other drinks kids might enjoy. However, not all drinks are created equal:

- Juices: They can be a good source of vitamins but often contain a lot of sugar. It's best to limit juice intake and opt for 100% fruit juice without added sugars.
- Sodas and Sugary Drinks: These should be avoided or consumed very sparingly. They have a lot of sugar and no nutritional value.
- Milk: A good source of calcium and vitamin D, which are important for growing bones.

Water is essential for kids to stay healthy, happy, and active. Drinking enough water helps with everything from keeping their brains sharp to their bodies strong. By making water a fun and regular part of their daily routine, kids can develop healthy habits that will benefit them for a lifetime. So, let's all remember to drink up and stay hydrated!



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IT IS IMPORTANT TO STAY HYDRATED,  
HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DO SO!

**Choose water instead of sugary drinks!**

**Drink 6-8 Cups of water per day!**

**Drink water for more energy!**

**Drink water for a smart brain!**

**Drink More Water**





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IT IS IMPORTANT TO STAY HYDRATED,  
HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DO SO!

**Replace soda and juice with water!**

**Drink 6-8 Cups of water per day!**

**Drink water for lasting energy!**

**Drink water for a smart mind!**



# LESSON 04: REDUCTION OF SUGAR

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Cutting down on sugar is important for kids' health because eating too much sugar can cause health problems like obesity and tooth problems, as well as changes in their mood and behavior. To help kids eat less sugar, here are some ideas:

1. **Read the Labels:** Teach your kids to read food labels and be aware of how much sugar is in packed foods. Keep an eye out for extra sugars like corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, and others that are hard to find.
2. **Limit sugary drinks:** Water should be the main drink you drink. Fruit juices and beers often have a lot of sugar, so drink them in moderation. Better yet, eat whole fruits instead of fruit drinks that have been pressed fresh and have added sugars.
3. **Choose Whole Foods:** Eat fruits, veggies, lean meats, whole grains, and other foods that have been lightly prepared. These foods usually have less sugar and more protein.
4. **Snacks that are good for you:** Instead of sugary snacks like cookies, candies, or granola bars with added sugar, give them healthy snacks like cheese, nuts, fruits, veggies with hummus or yogurt dip, or whole grain bread.
5. **Limit Desserts:** Only serve desserts on rare events. Instead, serve fruit salads, yogurt parfaits, or homemade treats with less sugar.

# LESSON 04: REDUCTION OF SUGAR

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6. Lead by Example: Show others how to eat well by eating that way yourself. Children will likely do what you do if they see you making good choices.
7. Involve Kids in Meal Prep: Get kids involved in planning and making meals. This not only helps them learn useful skills for everyday life, but it also makes them like healthy things.
8. Teach Your Kids About Sugar: Tell your kids why it's bad for their health to eat too much sugar and how less sugar can help. Use words and pictures that are right for their age to help them understand.
9. Keep an eye on portion sizes: Watch how much you eat, especially when it comes to sweets. Kids should learn about balance and be told to enjoy smaller amounts of sweets.
10. Celebrate Non-Food prizes: Instead of giving them sweets as prizes, find other things they'll enjoy, like more time to play, a fun trip, or a special activity they can do.

By using these tips, you can slowly cut down on your child's sugar diet and help them form good eating habits that will last a lifetime.

# TIPS FOR REDUCING SUGAR INTAKE

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Reducing sugar intake for children and teenagers can have numerous benefits for their health and development. Here are some key advantages:

## **1. Better Weight Management**

Lowering sugar can help prevent obesity by reducing excess calorie intake, which is crucial during growth spurts and developmental phases.

## **2. Improved Dental Health**

Sugar is a major contributor to tooth decay. Reducing sugar can decrease the risk of cavities and promote better oral hygiene.

## **3. Enhanced Nutritional Intake**

Cutting back on sugary foods allows for more nutrient-dense options, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins, which support overall growth and development.

## **4. Stable Energy Levels**

High sugar consumption can lead to energy spikes and crashes. A lower sugar diet can promote more consistent energy levels, improving focus and mood.

## **5. Reduced Risk of Chronic Diseases**

Early reduction of sugar intake can lower the risk of developing conditions like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and metabolic syndrome later in life.

# TIPS FOR REDUCING SUGAR INTAKE

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## **6. Better Mental Health**

High sugar diets have been linked to increased anxiety and depression. Reducing sugar can support better emotional well-being.

## **7. Improved Behavior and Focus**

Some studies suggest that high sugar intake may contribute to hyperactivity in children. A balanced diet can promote better concentration and behavior in school.

## **8. Healthier Taste Preferences**

Reducing sugar helps children develop a preference for less sweet foods, fostering healthier eating habits in the long run.

## **9. Stronger Immune System**

Excess sugar can weaken the immune response. A balanced diet supports a stronger immune system, helping children fight off illnesses more effectively.

## **10. Better Sleep Quality**

High sugar consumption can disrupt sleep patterns. A balanced diet may promote better sleep, which is essential for growth and development.

By focusing on reducing sugar intake, parents can help support their children's long-term health and well-being, setting the stage for healthier habits as they grow into adulthood.



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## How to Reduce Sugar?

What impact does consuming **TOO MUCH** sugar have in our bodies?



Enjoy fruits for dessert instead of cookies or pastries



Reduce sugary drinks like sodas, fruit punch, lemonade and 100% fruit juice. Instead, encourage your child to drink lots of water.



Sugar can destroy teeth and make them appear brown.



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# Reduction of Sugar

## Avoid Sugary Drinks

Sugary drinks raise blood sugar levels, so try replacing them with water, unsweetened sparkling water, herbal teas, or coffee.



## Snack Wisely

Try roasted nuts, lower-fat cheese, crackers, veggies and dip, and plain yogurt with fresh fruit.



## Drink Water

Drinking water helps your kidneys flush out excess sugar.



## Read Food Labels

Look for the "added sugars" section on the nutrition label to see how much added sugar is in a serving



## Avoid Sugary Foods

Avoid sugary desserts, sauces with added sugar, and table sugar, syrup, honey, and molasses.



# RESOURCES

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**How to Reduce Added Sugar in Your Child's Diet:  
AAP Tips**

**<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/How-to-Reduce-Added-Sugar-in-Your-Childs-Diet.aspx>**

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