



Make healthy easy with nrgBalance 12345!

An important part of being healthy is achieving **energy balance**: eating and drinking (energy in) to provide the right amount of fuel our bodies need for healthy growth, every day living and physical activity (energy out).

nrgBalance 12345! highlights five recommended behaviors for maintaining a good health and provides simple, practical tips for helping families achieve energy balance every day.

Start with one of the five guidelines and make it a goal for your family this month. Next month, add another. Make choices together, try it together – and before you know it, you'll all be on your way to energy balance!



One hour of physical activity each day

Research indicates that children who do not engage in regular physical activity are at greater risk of obesity. Activity habits that are formed during early childhood increase the likelihood of being an active adult. Experts recommend kids accumulate 60 minutes of moderate daily activity.

Make a goal to move more as a family

- Explore close-to-home parks and trails for fun and free activities
- Dance to your favorite tunes or build a fort indoors
- Walk or bike to the store, school, park, library, or community events
- Celebrate special occasions – birthdays, holidays, anniversaries – with something active, such as a hike, bike ride, or Frisbee® game
- Keep a family activity log; encourage everyone in the family to take part by posting the log on the refrigerator



Less than two hours of screen time each day

In a year, the average child spends 900 hours in school and nearly 1,023 hours in front of a TV. Evidence shows that children tend to be less physically active when they devote large amounts of time to stationary activities – spending time in front of the TV and at the computer.

Replace screen time with fun family alternatives

- Walk, hike, bike, and paddle outdoors
- Play games – inside or outside
- Cook a family meal together and enjoy it without turning on the TV
- Try a weekday TV ban and you'll have more time for family togetherness to spend on meals, games and physical activity
- Take TVs out of bedrooms



Three meals a day with family and friends

Research suggests that neglecting to eat certain meals, particularly breakfast, can lead to weight gain. The family meal has a significant impact on the nutritional quality of children's diets. Studies show that a higher frequency of family meals is associated with increased consumption of fruits, vegetables and milk and less fried foods and soft drinks.

Share meals together and increase quality family time

- Start the day with breakfast including at least 3 food groups such as whole grains, non-fat/low-fat dairy or lean protein, and fruit
- Be creative and flexible about where and when you eat – pack a picnic to eat together at the sports field either before or after the game
- Include the whole family in meal planning and preparation. Rotate favorite meals and duties such as salad chef or table setter
- Make casseroles, soups, or stews on weekends and freeze for quick family weeknight meals
- Provide healthy selections at every meal and focus on sharing each other's company so kids learn to eat only as much as they need



Four or more glasses of water or no/low calorie beverages each day

Soft drinks are the leading source of added sugars in the daily diet of youth. These calories may be easy to over-consume, because beverages seem less satisfying and filling than from food. Research supports a clear association between sweetened beverage consumption, increased caloric intake, and childhood obesity. Experts recommend limiting children's access to sugar-sweetened beverages both at home and at school.

Stay hydrated without adding extra calories

- Heading out? Bring water bottles or other no/low calorie beverages
- Limit caffeinated beverages
- If you choose juice, stick to 100% fruit juice (American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 4-6 oz. serving for 1-6 year olds and 8-12 oz. serving for 7-18 year olds)
- Make it a habit to drink a glass of water or milk with family meals
- Rehydrate with water after sporting events and exercise



Five or more fruits and veggies each day

Studies show that increased fruit and vegetable consumption can protect against obesity because they are low in calories, high in fiber, and make you feel full. Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables also provides valuable vitamins, minerals and fiber children need for good health.

Get more nutrients and fiber with fewer calories

- Make veggies the largest portion on the plate
- Combine fruits/veggies with nuts and cheese for wholesome snacks
- Include at least one fruit/veggie at every meal
- Pack whole and dried fruits for a great on-the-go snack

Remember nrgBalance 12345! to help your family make healthy choices everyday.

When our “energy in” exceeds our “energy out” over time, weight gain and associated health risks may occur. On the other hand, weight loss below an ideal body weight can also lead to a serious medical issue.

For more information, please talk with your physician and visit www.nrgbalance.org.