

# Take **Healthy** Steps **Healthy** <sup>for</sup> **Lives** Together



Your family's guide  
to a healthier future!



# Welcome

## Dear Families,

Welcome to the **Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives Family Guide** for families with children in grades K-6. *Take Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives Together* is a 10-part family guide that shares valuable information customized to the ages of your children and their health needs. It is based on 10 healthy steps that can lead you and your family to a healthier lifestyle by focusing on eating healthy and being more active—together.

Being active and eating healthy go hand-in-hand with other healthy habits such as getting a good night's sleep. The healthy steps in this guide work together to positively impact all areas of your child's physical, social and emotional health and well-being—all of which will impact their learning readiness and success inside and outside of the classroom. Our hope is that this resource will help your family have fun while learning about, talking about and taking healthy steps!

Sincerely,

Your Partners at  
Nestlé and NEA Healthy Futures



The Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives Family Guide is available in English and Spanish. For more information and to order additional materials online, please visit [nestleusa.com/healthysteps](https://www.nestleusa.com/healthysteps)





## Table of Contents

Family Activity Sheet 1: Our Healthy Family	4-5
Family Activity Sheet 2: We Choose MyPlate	6-7
Family Activity Sheet 3: We Eat Breakfast	8-9
Family Activity Sheet 4: We Eat Fruits and Vegetables	10-11
Family Activity Sheet 5: We Eat Healthy Snacks	12-13
Family Activity Sheet 6: We Drink Water	14-15
Family Activity Sheet 7: We Are Active	16-17
Family Activity Sheet 8: We Play	18-19
Family Activity Sheet 9: We Unplug	20-21
Family Activity Sheet 10: We Recharge	22-23

### Family Activity Sheet Components

- Important information about your child's health
- Ideas to help your family THINK, EAT and MOVE healthy
- Conversation starters
- Suggested list of children's books to go with each topic

# #1: Our Healthy Family

## Think Together

- You are the most important **role model** in your child's life. The lessons a child learns about being healthy come from watching you and talking with you during the time you spend together.
- Current research indicates that even as little as **20 minutes of family time each day** can help children develop life-long healthy habits.
- As your family explores what it means to be healthy, **have fun and keep it positive**.
- Talk with your family about **what it means to be healthy**. What are your child's interests about his or her own health? What are yours?

## Eat Together

- **Family meals** are an excellent chance to model and talk about good nutrition and healthy eating—shared mealtime can be at breakfast, lunch, dinner or even snack time!
- Show your child how to **build a healthy plate** with foods from the five food groups (Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Dairy and Protein Foods).
- Let your child see you choose **MORE fruits, vegetables and whole-grains** and **LESS of foods with added sugars, fats and salt**.
- Talk with your child about why **water is a better choice than sugary drinks**.

## Move Together

- The partner to eating healthy is being active. **Adults need at least 2½ hours a week** of physical activity and elementary-aged **children need at least 60 minutes a day**. Show your child how important daily physical activity is by being active together.
- **Unplug** from screens so that your family can sit less and move more.
- **Play together:** Active play is a fun way to get your family moving.
- **Get outside:** Being outdoors is a great stress reliever for the whole family.
- **Walk and talk** on a family hike. Ask your child which physical activities he or she enjoys and share your favorites too.



### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What do you think "healthy" means?

Name some things you do every day that are healthy...

It is important to eat healthy foods and drink healthy beverages because...

It is important to be active every day because...

# #1: Our Healthy Family

Take **Healthy Steps** for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Schools and Families Can Get Healthier Together

Talk with educators at your child's school about what he or she is learning regarding all health topics, including good nutrition and leading an active lifestyle. If your child's school is in need of health curriculum resources, share these links for our complimentary Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives teaching materials:

- [nestleusa.com/healthysteps](http://nestleusa.com/healthysteps)
- [neahealthyfutures.org](http://neahealthyfutures.org)



**The best path to a healthier future for your family is one you take together!**

To get started, follow the 10 Steps to a Healthier Future in the Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives Family Guide. Tackle one step at a time and keep it fun and positive. Your family can learn how to think, eat and move healthy—together.

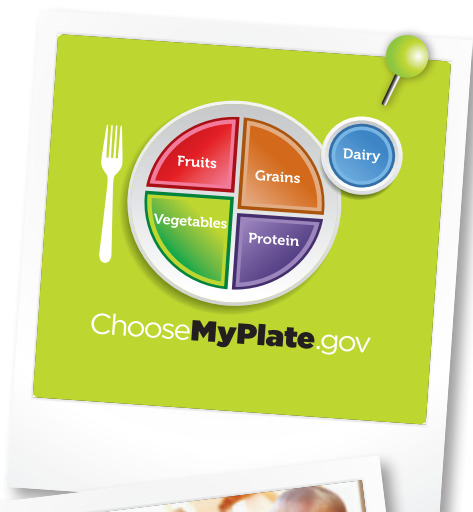
## Read Together

- ***We Eat Dinner in the Bathtub*** by Angela Shelf Medearis (fiction)
- ***Healthy Habits, Healthy You*** by Lisa Greathouse (non-fiction)





## #2: We Choose MyPlate



### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What do you think of when you see the MyPlate icon?

Does the MyPlate icon mean that foods have to be separate on your plate?

Do you have to drink milk with every meal?

### Think Together

- Use the **MyPlate** symbol as a reminder to build a healthy plate at meal times and snack times.
- Talk with your family about what it means to **build a healthy plate**.
- Think about some of the steps to build a healthy plate:
  - Make **half of your plate fruits and vegetables**.
  - Choose **skim or 1% milk**.
  - Make at least **half of your grains whole-grains**.
  - **Vary your protein** food choices.

### Eat Together

- Children who take part in **family meals** are more likely to be a healthy weight and have greater academic achievement. While you're eating, talk about MyPlate.
- **Match MyPlate Mondays:** Have your family members try to make their plates match the MyPlate symbol.
- The recommended amount to eat every day from each food group varies person to person and is determined based on factors such as **how active you are**. To find the right amounts for your family, visit **choosemyplate.gov**.

### Move Together

- Play an active game, like **Appetite for the Alphabet** (see next page), to help your family remember the MyPlate Fantastic Five.
- Following MyPlate will give your family the **strength and energy** to move and play all day. Use it to take a bike ride, go for a walk or play in a favorite park together.

# #2: We Choose MyPlate

Take **Healthy Steps** for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Get to Know the MyPlate Fantastic Five



### VEGETABLES

Broccoli, red pepper, green beans, corn, spinach

#### Daily recommendations:

- Children 4-8 years old: 1½ cups
- Girls 9-13 years old: 2 cups
- Boys 9-13 years old: 2½ cups
- ½-cup example: handful of baby carrots (about 6)



### FRUITS

Oranges, blueberries, pineapple, grapes, apple

#### Daily recommendations:

- Children 4-8 years old: 1-1½ cups
- Girls and boys 9-13 years old: 1½ cups
- ½-cup example: one small banana



### DAIRY

Swiss cheese, low-fat yogurt, fat-free milk, cottage cheese, cheddar cheese cubes

#### Daily recommendations:

- Children 4-8 years old: 2½ cups
- Girls and boys 9-13 years old: 3 cups
- ½-cup example: one slice of hard cheese (i.e., Swiss or cheddar)



### GRAIN

Whole-grain crackers, oatmeal, whole-grain rice, whole-grain tortilla, whole-grain bread

#### Daily recommendations:

- Children 4-8 years old and girls 9-13 years old: 5 ounces
- Boys 9-13 years old: 6 ounces
- 1-ounce example: one slice of bread



### PROTEIN

Small grilled chicken breast, salmon fillet, beans, eggs, mixed nuts

#### Daily recommendations:

- Children 4-8 years old: 4 ounces
- Girls and boys 9-13 years old: 5 ounces
- 2-3-ounce example: a small hamburger

Note: Daily intake recommendations are based on age, gender and level of physical activity. The amounts listed above are the minimums and are appropriate for children who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day. For additional, more specific recommendations, visit [choosemyplate.org](http://choosemyplate.org).

## Read Together

- *The Cow in Patrick O'Shanahann's Kitchen* by Diana Prichard (fiction)
- *Corn is Maize: The Gift of the Indians* by Aliko (non-fiction)
- *Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food & Nutrition* by Lizzy Rockwell (non-fiction)



**TRIVIA ANSWER:** "Sometimes foods" are left off of MyPlate. They contain added sugar, salt and solid fats due to the way they are processed or prepared (e.g., cookies, chips and hot dogs). Although they may contain small amounts of food group foods, they are mostly made up of empty calories.

## Healthy Family Trivia

The purpose of MyPlate is to remind us of the five food groups: Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein Foods and Dairy, and to serve as a visual inspiration for the relative amounts of the different food groups.

Do you notice what is missing on MyPlate? Take a guess and then check your answer below!

## APPETITE FOR THE ALPHABET



1. Stand in a circle and have family members take turns naming foods from the five food groups that start with each letter of the alphabet.
2. Start with the letter "A."
3. Once everyone names a food that starts with "A," move on to letter "B" and so on.
4. Play outdoors or put on a little music and play inside. As you play, move in different ways like jumping or marching in place.



# #3: We Eat Breakfast

## Think Together



### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is your favorite healthy breakfast food?

What do you think a "balanced breakfast" means?

Why is it important to start every day with a healthy breakfast?

What is something you can choose for breakfast that is quick but also healthy?



- Breakfast really is the **most important meal of the day!** Talk with your family about why it is important to eat a healthy and balanced breakfast every morning.
- Healthy breakfast eaters are more likely to maintain a healthy weight and are healthier and eat more nutritiously overall.
- Think about how to **build a healthy breakfast plate** based on the five food groups.
- Make a **goal** to eat at least one sit-down breakfast together each week that has all five food groups.
- Think about how you can **balance** the amount you are eating from each food group throughout the day. For example, some mornings you may only have foods from three of the five food groups on your plate for breakfast and will need to balance this by having foods from the other food groups throughout the rest of the day.

## Eat Together

- **Eating together as a family is important for breakfast time too.** Families that eat together tend to eat a healthier breakfast; eating together also gives parents and caregivers the chance to model healthy eating behaviors.
- We are often in a hurry in the mornings. While a sit-down, balanced and healthy breakfast should be the goal, **healthy quick-start or grab-and-go breakfast items** should be available for backup.
- Consider preparing some breakfast items the night before to **make breakfast faster and easier to prepare** in the morning. Make oat muffins with shredded zucchini and carrots or pre-slice strawberries to put on top of a whole-grain waffle.
- If your child isn't hungry in the morning or your family schedule doesn't afford much time for breakfast at home, **learn about breakfast programs offered at school.**
- Remember the importance of a good night's sleep: Children who go to bed earlier and get enough sleep are more likely to wake up in time to eat a healthy breakfast and have a greater appetite in the morning.

## Move Together

- On the weekends, follow a healthy breakfast with **a walk or a trip to a local playground.**
- On school days, follow a healthy breakfast by **walking to school** when possible or by walking to your bus stop. While waiting for the bus, **play a quick active game** (e.g. Simon Says or Animal Action). Every little bit of activity adds up.



# #3: We Eat Breakfast

Take **Healthy Steps** for **Healthy Lives** Together

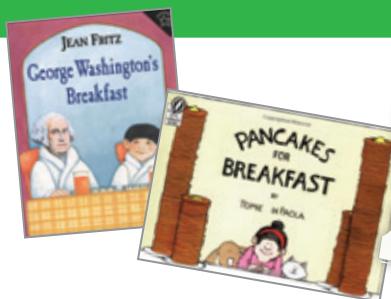
## How to Build a Healthy Breakfast Plate

Pick at least one item from each of the five food groups.

<b>Protein Source</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eggs (use limited added fat when cooking) (e.g., poached, scrambled, omelet or hard boiled)</li> <li>Lean breakfast meats (e.g., Canadian bacon, turkey bacon or sausage)</li> <li>Peanut butter, almond butter (with no added sugars)</li> <li>Nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy Item</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milk (non-fat or low-fat)</li> <li>Yogurt (non-fat/low-fat and low sugar)</li> <li>Cheese (low-fat)</li> <li>Cottage cheese (low-fat)</li> </ul>
<b>Whole-Grain Item (Carbohydrate)</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole-grain cold cereal</li> <li>Whole-grain hot cereal (e.g., oatmeal)</li> <li>Whole-grain bread or toast</li> <li>Whole-grain waffles or pancakes</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetable</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh, frozen or canned</li> <li>100% vegetable juice</li> <li>Cut-up vegetables added to scrambled eggs or omelets</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh, frozen, canned or cups (no added sugars and packaged in water or 100% juice)</li> <li>100% fruit juice</li> <li>Dried fruit (e.g., raisins with no added sugars)</li> <li>Cut-up fruit added to yogurt or cottage cheese or put on top of cold cereal or oatmeal</li> </ul>

## Read Together

- George Washington's Breakfast** by Jean Fritz George (fiction)
- Pancakes for Breakfast** by Tomie dePaola (fiction)



**TRIVIA ANSWER:** True. Children who eat a healthy breakfast have better concentration and more energy. They also get along better with their classmates and have fewer behavioral problems, tardiness and visits to the school nurse.

**Healthy Family Trivia**  
True or False: Skipping breakfast and/or being hungry impact a child's ability to learn.



**Quick-Start Breakfast Ideas**

- Wonderful wrap: Grill a whole-grain tortilla filled with scrambled eggs, fat-free shredded cheese and cut-up vegetables; serve with orange wedges.
- Super smoothie: Blend peanut butter (no sugar added), fat-free milk, rolled oats and a frozen, cut-up banana; serve with a whole-grain English muffin topped with sliced tomatoes.

## #4: We Eat Fruits and Vegetables

### Think Together

- Talk about the fruits and vegetables your family likes and **new ones that they would like to try.**
- Set a goal to **try one new fruit or vegetable every week.**
- Think about a rainbow when it comes to fruits and vegetables. Be sure to **include red, orange and dark-green vegetables.**

### Eat Together

- Enjoy **family meals** together as often as possible.
- Encourage your child to eat more fruits and vegetables by **cooking together.**
- **Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables.**
- Offer a fruit or vegetable with every meal and for every snack—**keep fruits and vegetables in easy-to-reach places.**
- Don't give up when introducing new fruits and vegetables! **It can take up to 15 different tries** for a child to like a new food.

### Move Together

- Children need **60 minutes of physical activity every day—make family time active time.**
- **Grocery shopping** is another way to get moving together. By both planning and shopping together, you can involve your child in choosing fruits and vegetables.
- **Grow a vegetable garden.** Bending, twisting, digging and weeding the garden are great ways for your family to be active together. No room? No problem! Look for a community garden where you live.
- **Visit a U-Pick farm or orchard** for a fun way to move together as a family and come home with fresh produce. Visit [localharvest.com](http://localharvest.com) to find one nearby.

### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is your favorite  
red fruit?

How many vegetables can you  
name that are dark green?

If you were planting a  
garden, what fruits and  
vegetables would you  
plant and why?



# #4: We Eat Fruits and Vegetables

Take **Healthy Steps** for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Tips for Encouraging Fruits and Vegetables

- Prepare fruits and vegetables in a variety of ways; try them raw, cooked, cut up and whole. Let your child choose which ways they like best.
- Don't let children fill up on snacks before meals; it is easier to get children to try new foods when they are hungry.
- Stay positive! If you feel like you have a "picky eater" on your hands, try to avoid labeling him or her as such. Children often grow into the labels we give them.
- Don't forget to be a role model by trying new foods yourself.

## Five-Food-Group Lunches

- Bean, low-fat cheese and whole-grain tortilla roll-up; tomato salsa; pineapple chunks and water
- Sliced cucumber, low-fat cheese and pita bread sandwich; sliced hard-boiled egg; grapes and water
- Black-bean soup; whole-grain crackers; low-fat cheddar cheese cubes; celery sticks; apple and water
- Grilled chicken-breast slices, spinach and strawberry salad; whole-grain roll and low-fat milk
- Whole-grain English muffin pizza (low-fat shredded cheese, tomato sauce, chopped broccoli and green pepper); blueberries; mixed nuts and water

## Schools and Families Can Get Healthier Together

- Work together with the school and other parents and caregivers to plant a vegetable garden and fruit trees on school grounds. For how-to tips visit [letsmove.gov/gardening-guide](http://letsmove.gov/gardening-guide).

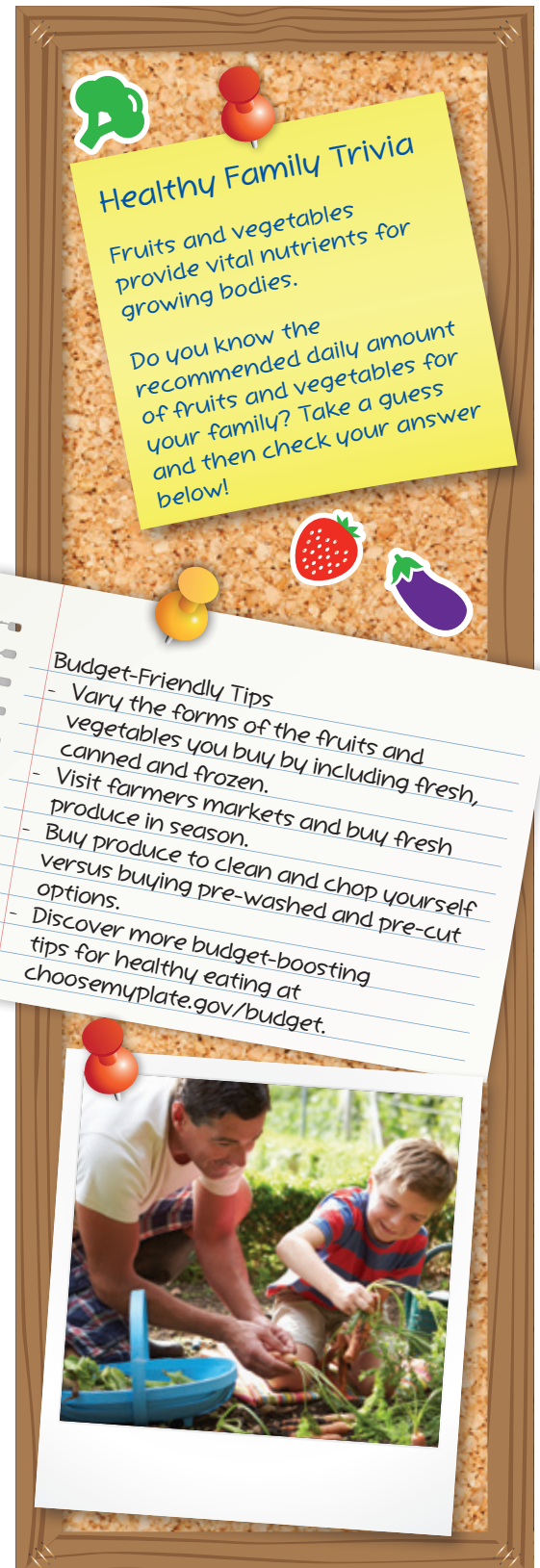
## Read Together

- **James and the Giant Peach** by Roald Dahl (fiction)
- **Vegetables (Food Groups)** by Lola M. Schaefer (non-fiction)



**TRIVIA ANSWER:** Children in grades K-6 who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day need to eat approximately 1½ cups of fruit and 1½ - 2½ cups of vegetables every day. A handful of baby carrots or one medium-size apple each count as about ½ cup.

The exact amount of fruits and vegetables we should eat every day depends on our age, gender and how active we are. Visit [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) to find the right amount for your family.



# #5: We Eat Healthy Snacks

## Think Together

- It's time to **rethink your child's snack!** Snack time provides an extra opportunity to eat more of the foods from the five food groups that nourish our bodies.
- Instead of looking at snack time as a chance for treats and sweets—look at snack time as a chance for **healthy eats!**
- Snacks containing **added sugars, salt and solid fats** are “**sometimes foods**” and should be eaten less often—not daily.
- Think of foods like **cookies, chips and hot dogs** as “**sometimes foods.**”
- Think of foods like **fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy items, whole-grains and lean protein foods** as “**everyday foods.**”
- Use **Nutrition Facts labels** and **ingredient lists** to help your family choose healthy snacks.

## Eat Together

- **Offer a fruit and/or vegetable at every snack time.** Save time by slicing fruits and vegetables beforehand and storing them in the refrigerator. Serve sliced vegetables with dips such as hummus or low-fat salad dressing. Serve sliced fruit with dips such as peanut butter or low-fat yogurt.
- **Involve your child in preparing healthy snacks.**
- Snacking together gives parents and caregivers the opportunity to **model healthy snacking.**

## Move Together

- Instead of giving sweets, reward good behavior or hard work with a fun family game of soccer or kickball, a trip to a state park or a freeze dance in your living room. **Moving together as a family is good for you and a great motivator too!**



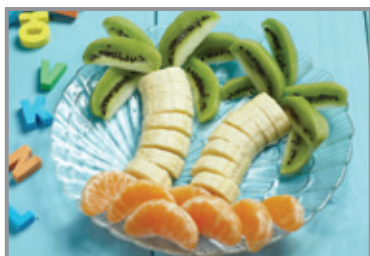


# #5: We Eat Healthy Snacks

Take **Healthy Steps**  
for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Snacking Fun with Fruits and Veggies

- Baby carrots and red and yellow pepper strips with low-fat ranch dressing for dipping
- Whole-wheat crackers, snap peas and hummus
- Rice crackers, apple slices and peanut butter
- Rye chips, orange wedges and low-fat string cheese



Add even more fun by letting your child use cut-up fruits and vegetables to create “pictures” of shapes, animals and other creatures on his or her plate.

## Schools and Families Can Get Healthier Together

Work together with your child’s school to see how healthy snacking can become a priority in the school and community as well as in your home. Visit [neahealthyfutures.org](http://neahealthyfutures.org) for family-led, school-based solutions.

## Read Together

- *The Empanadas That Abuela Made/Las Empanadas Que Hacia la Abuela* by Diane Gonzales Bertrand (fiction)
- *The Popcorn Book* by Tomie dePaola (fiction)



**TRIVIA ANSWER:** Sodium intake should be less than 1 teaspoon per day. One teaspoon of salt is 2,300 milligrams.

### Healthy Family Trivia

Everyone in your family, including children, should limit their total salt (sodium) intake to what amount? Take a guess and then check your answer below!

### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

Can you think of a healthy snack that you like to have after playing outside and being really active?

If you were going to give a friend a healthy snack, what would it be?

Why doesn't a “sometimes food” make a healthy everyday snack?

## #6: We Drink Water

### Think Together

- Talk about why it is important to **drink water every day**.
- Always **choose water over sugary drinks**.
- **Think about your drink!** Beverages with naturally occurring sugar, such as 100% fruit juice and fat-free or low-fat milk, are healthier choices than beverages with added sugar, such as soda.

### Eat Together

- At meal times, choose beverages that **help your family stay hydrated and healthy**.
- During family meals, children can learn to make healthy beverage choices, like choosing water, by watching you.
- **Say “so long to soda” and cut out caffeine for children.** Drinking soda is linked to tooth decay, unhealthy weight and low appetite (leading to eating less of the healthy foods that give us the nutrients we need).

### Move Together

- **Keep your active family hydrated** with healthy beverage choices when you are on the move.
- **Increase fluid intake** when you’re spending more time in the sun, like swimming, camping or playing soccer.
- Water is a great beverage choice for **on-the-go families**.



# #6: We Drink Water

Take **Healthy Steps**  
for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Recommended Daily Fluid Intake for Children

	4-8 years	9-13 years
<b>Girls</b>	5 cups	7 cups
<b>Boys</b>	5 cups	8 cups

\*1 cup of liquid for 4- to 8-year-olds and 1.5 cups of liquid for 9- to 13-year-olds comes from the foods they eat. This amount can be subtracted from the total recommendation (e.g., a 7-year-old girl would need to drink 4 cups of liquid per day in addition to her solid food intake and a 10-year-old boy would need to drink 6.5 cups of liquid per day in addition to his solid food intake).

Source: Institute of Medicine

## Average Amount of Sugar Found in Common Drinks

Drink (12-ounce serving)	Sugar
Bottled water	0 teaspoons
Low-fat milk*	5 teaspoons
Sports drink	5 teaspoons
Lemonade	8 teaspoons
Sweetened tea	8 teaspoons
100% fruit juice (e.g., orange juice)*	10 teaspoons
Cola	10 teaspoons
Fruit-flavored drink (e.g., fruit punch)	11 teaspoons
Orange soda	13 teaspoons

\*Naturally occurring sugar

## Read Together

- **A Cool Drink of Water** (National Geographic)  
by Barbara Kerley (non-fiction)
- **Ryan and Jimmy: And the Well in Africa That Brought Them Together** by Herb Shoveller (non-fiction)
- **Water: The Most Important Drink in the World**  
by Miley Smiley (non-fiction)



### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

Can you name two healthy beverages you had this week to drink?  
If I asked you to pick a drink that was healthy for you, what would you choose?

How much water do you think an elephant drinks? Do animals like water? Why do you think animals need water? Why do you think plants need water?

What healthier options count toward your child's total daily fluid intake?

- Plain drinking water
- Milk (low-fat or fat-free)
- Fruit juice (100% juice, no sugar added)
- Soup broth (low-sodium)
- Decaffeinated iced tea with or without lemon (low sugar)



# #7: We Are Active

## What Is Physical Activity?

Physical activity needs for families can mostly be met by just **“letting kids be kids.”** Playing soccer or kickball, bike riding or hiking on your favorite trail—even active chores like helping wash the car—all count!



### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Do you think your heart beats faster when you are walking or running?
- Can you think of two games you can play outside that would make your heart beat faster?
- Do you know your heart is a muscle? What is another muscle?

## Think Together

- Children need **at least 60 minutes a day** of physical activity and adults need at least 2½ hours per week.
- Talk with your family about why it is important to **lead an active lifestyle**. Think about the different ways your family is active (e.g., chores, sports, gym class, etc.).
- The best way to get active is to **choose activities your family enjoys**. Think about the activities you like to do and pick some new activities to try together.

## Eat Together

- Playing hard and being active leads to better sleep, **increased appetite** and **healthier eating**.
- Active bodies need **strong muscles and bones, and lots of energy**.
  - Protein** foods help your body build and repair muscle. Choose lean or low-fat cuts of beef or pork and skinless chicken or turkey. Choose seafood twice a week.
  - Calcium** found in dairy items helps your body build and maintain strong bones. Choose fat-free or low-fat milk, cheese and yogurt.
  - Grains** give your body the energy needed to be active. Choose bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereals and tortillas. Remember to make half of your grain food choices whole-grains.

## Move Together

- Lead by example.** Let your child see you being active and having fun while doing so.
- The recommendation of 60 minutes a day of physical activity is the minimum. Together, your family can surpass the 60 minutes—**the more moving, the better!**

# #7: We Are Active

Take **Healthy Steps**  
**Healthy** for **Lives** Together

## Why Be Active?

- Feel better.
- Sleep well at night.
- Move around more easily.
- Have stronger muscles and bones.
- Stay at or get to a healthy weight.
- Enjoy your family and have fun together.
- Boost your immune system.

## It's All About 'Bouts'

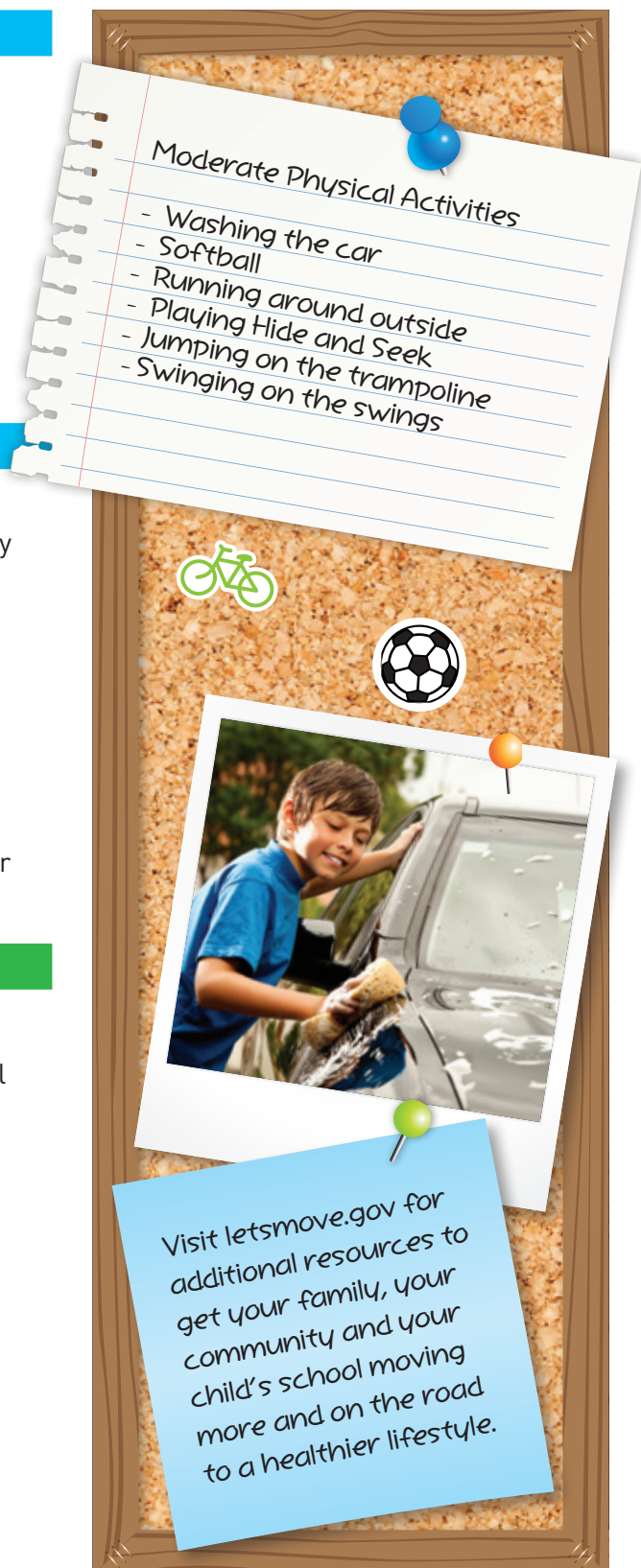
Encourage children to mix moderate and vigorous activities into their day. Try to accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity with smaller bouts. A bout is a time period or section of time.

Sample 60 minutes of activity for an elementary-aged child:

- 20-minute basketball game at recess (vigorous)
- 5-minute walk home from school (moderate)
- 10 minutes to help carry in the groceries (moderate)
- 15-minute walk with your family in the evening (moderate)
- 10 minutes of jumping on a trampoline or jumping rope in your backyard or at the park (vigorous)

## Read Together

- ***From Head to Toe*** by Eric Carle (fiction)
- ***The Busy Body Book: A Kid's Guide to Fitness*** by Lizzy Rockwell (non-fiction)



## #8: We Play



Other ways your family can keep moving together, inside:

- Have a freeze dance.
- Play a game of charades that involves guessing what physical activity or sport a person is acting out.
- Build an indoor fort.
- Hold a lip syncing battle.
- Set up an obstacle course.

### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

Which season is your favorite for playing outside?  
Why do you think being outside is good for you? How do you feel when you are outside in the fresh air?  
If you were going on a long bike ride in the summer, what would you take along with you?

#### Think Together

- **Healthy steps lead outside!** Regularly getting outside and being active in nature is proven to improve children's physical and mental health.
- Outdoor activity helps children **maintain a healthy weight, boosts their immunity and bone health, and lowers stress.**
- **Playing is learning!** Free, unstructured, active play (and the more of it the better!) is not only good, but also necessary for the healthy growth and development of a child's brain.

#### Eat Together

- Outdoor play and exploration makes a great time for a **family picnic**. Eating together outdoors provides the opportunity for fresh air and undivided attention.
- When you head out on your adventure, remember to pack a backpack full of **healthy, easy-to-eat snacks** (carrot sticks, apples, whole-grain pretzels, nuts, fat-free string cheese and water).

#### Move Together

- Play hard! Get outside more! Focus on fun and being together, but **be safe** (teach your child to remember things like helmets, sunscreen, proper equipment, extra clothing, hats and sunglasses, rain gear and water to drink).
- **Move inside and out.** Don't let rainy days keep you from being active. Just dress accordingly and keep safety in mind when it comes to weather or temperatures. When you really can't be outside due to weather, find ways to play and be active inside (family dance-off anyone?).



# #8: We Play

Take **Healthy Steps**  
for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Active Play

Your child's 60 minutes (or more) a day of physical activity can be reached through old-fashioned free play and running around outdoors.

Examples of active play:

- Running
- Climbing
- Dancing
- Swinging
- Tumbling
- Playing hopscotch or foursquare
- Skipping
- Hopping
- Galloping
- Rolling down a hill
- Hula hooping

## Schools and Families Can Get Healthier Together

- Talk with your child's school and school district about opening the school playground for community use before and after school and on the weekend.
- Make sure your child has an opportunity for recess, physical education classes and activity breaks throughout the school day as well. Visit [neahealthyfutures.org](http://neahealthyfutures.org) for more ideas and resources.

## Read Together

- ***Are You Ready to Play Outside?*** by Mo Willems (fiction)
- ***Outside Your Window: A First Book of Nature*** by Nicola Davies (non-fiction)



### Explore!

Find forests, parks, trails and nature near you:

- [discovertheforest.org/?m=1#map](http://discovertheforest.org/?m=1#map)
- [americasstateparks.org](http://americasstateparks.org)
- [naturefind.com](http://naturefind.com)

Find a playground or play space near you:

- [mapofplay.kaboom.org](http://mapofplay.kaboom.org)



### Give Me Five

Fun and easy outdoor activities with no equipment needed:

- Freeze Tag
- Hide and Seek
- Duck, Duck, Goose
- Red Light, Green Light
- Simon Says

# #9: We Unplug

## What Is Screen Time?

- Screen time includes using electronic media (e.g., watching TV or tablets, playing video games, using computers or cell phones). Screen time is a sedentary activity.



## HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What do you think is good about having computers and electronics?

Does your heart usually beat fast when you are watching a television show or texting on your cell phone? Why not?

Which activities would make you want to put down your tablet, controller or remote control as fast as possible (e.g., sled riding, skiing, bike riding, roller-skating, etc.)?

## Think Together

- Being active is very high on the priority list when it comes to the health and future wellness of our families! Children (and adults) also need to **avoid being sedentary for long periods of time**. Think about how your family can turn family time into active time!
- The more time we are plugged-in or in front of a screen, the less time we are moving and being active. Being active is much better for our bodies. **Limit screen time to 2 hours per day**.
- Help your children think about spending less time “plugged-in” by telling them how **sedentary activities affect their overall health**. Talk to them about things they can do to be healthier.
- **Be a good role model** as a parent or caregiver. Decrease your own screen time to 2 hours a day outside of work hours.

## Eat Together

- Unplug and enjoy family meals together. Avoid eating meals in front of the TV and have children put their cell phones and other hand-held devices away. Parents and caregivers are important role models for this step, too. **Go screen-free for meals**.
- For adults and children alike, multitasking (e.g., eating while watching television, using hand-held devices or viewing social media sites) **and hurried or distracted eating can lead to a greater calorie consumption and weight gain**.
- **Have your family practice “mindfulness.”** Mindful eating is when we slow down and pay attention to what we are eating. It also means getting rid of distractions like those caused by screen time. When we pay attention to what we eat, we are more likely to make healthier food choices and feel fuller after eating.

## Move Together

- When you are watching television, turn screen time into active time by doing **fun and active energizers during commercials**. Try jogging in place while telling jokes, balancing on a yoga ball or even tidying the family room.
- **Motivate your children to unplug** by suggesting other activities your family can enjoy together, such as taking a bike ride, roller-skating or going for a walk.

# #9: We Unplug

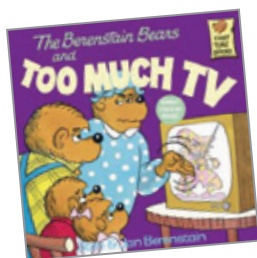
Take **Healthy Steps**  
for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Unplugging for Health

- Make your child's homework area a screen-free zone.
- Keep your child's bedroom TV free.
- Stop all electronic media usage at least 30 minutes prior to your child's bedtime (and yours!).
- When you are watching TV, do so as a family. Decide which programs to watch ahead of time and turn off the TV when those programs are over.
- If your child spends a lot of leisure time playing video games or other "plugged-in" activities, work with them to reduce this time by 50% with a goal of getting to no more than 2 hours a day to promote a healthy balance.

## Read Together

- ***The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV*** by Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain (fiction)
- ***A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*** by Marla Frazee (non-fiction)



**TRIVIA ANSWER:** The average American child spends 53 hours a week in front of a screen, not including their screen time at school. That's more than a full-time job.

**Healthy Family Trivia**

How much time do children in America spend "plugged-in" (i.e., watching TV; using tablets, cell phones, video games and computers; and surfing the web) every week? Take a guess and then check your answer below!





# #10: We Recharge

## Think Together

- **Getting enough sleep** every night is the healthiest way for your family to recharge.
- Children need **10-12 hours of sleep each night**.
- An **electronic media curfew 30 minutes prior to bedtime** will help your child fall asleep more easily and sleep better.
- Talk with your family about the importance of a good night's sleep. **Create a nightly bedtime routine for your family.**
- A bedtime routine is a great opportunity to **focus on other aspects of your child's health** as well (e.g., brushing their teeth and enjoying stories together).

## Eat Together

- Be sure to enjoy **healthy snacks** in the evening. Choose snacks without added sugar (such as fruits and vegetables). Parents and caregivers can model healthy snacking choices before bedtime.
- **Water is the best drink for bedtime and throughout the night.** When we sleep, we can become dehydrated, so it is often better to start each morning with water to drink as well.
- **Choose water over sugary drinks** as often as you can and avoid sugary drinks before bedtime.
- Caffeinated beverages should be limited for children throughout the day and especially at bedtime. **Caffeine can lead to difficulty sleeping in children and adults.**

## Move Together

- **Children who are active during the day sleep better at night.** Remember: Children need to be active for at least 60 minutes every day!
- **Try including "bedtime moves" in your bedtime routine** (i.e., calming stretches and deep breathing) that can help children transition their bodies to a resting state.

### HEALTHY CONVERSATION STARTERS

What types of things do you think help you get a good night's sleep?

What types of things can interfere with a good night's sleep?

How can I help you get more sleep or sleep better?

# #10: We Recharge

Take **Healthy Steps**  
for **Healthy Lives** Together

## Bedtime Routines Really Work

Children with regular bedtime routines and consistent bedtimes are more likely to be healthy sleepers!

### How to create a family bedtime routine:

- Using a large piece of paper or poster board, record the steps agreed on by your family.
- Decorate the poster by drawing pictures and designs to illustrate the steps.
- Determine what time to begin your bedtime routine each night.
  - List the amount of time each step will take.
  - Start with a set bedtime and count backwards by the number of minutes each step of your routine will take.
  - Record the time you should begin your bedtime routine and the actual bedtime on the poster.

## Read Together

- **Hey Sheep!!! Let Me Sleep** by Sigal Adler (fiction)
- **Why Juan Can't Sleep: A Mystery** by Karl Beckstrand (fiction)
- **Teach Me About Bedtime** by Joy Berry (non-fiction)



**TRIVIA ANSWER:** Pediatric dental experts recommend that parents and caregivers assist children with brushing teeth through age 8. Elementary-aged children can brush their own teeth but through third grade, parents and caregivers should still be involved.





[nestleusa.com/healthysteps](http://nestleusa.com/healthysteps)  
[neahealthyfutures.org](http://neahealthyfutures.org)

MyPlate is USDA's primary food group symbol. It is based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.  
For more information, visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) and [DietaryGuidelines.gov](http://DietaryGuidelines.gov).

To help promote the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Nestlé and the NEA Healthy Futures each have become National Strategic Partners with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Nutrition Communicator's Network. As partners of USDA, NEA Healthy Futures and several Nestlé brands will each develop a series of innovative communications efforts to promote the Dietary Guidelines Consumer Messages, encouraging consumers to make healthier food choices and exercise more.

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Every family is unique. Consult with a physician or health care professional to discuss your family's specific nutrition and exercise needs.



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