

Being HEALTHY everyday is as easy as 12345!

Everyday people hear and see different information on TV, over the radio and in magazines about how to be healthy. With so many messages about ways to achieve good health, it's easy to be confused about what really works.

One thing is clear. 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, everyday living and physical activity (energy out). nrgBalance 12345! highlights five recommended behaviors for maintaining good health and provides simple, practical tips for helping families achieve energy balance every day.

1 Engage in at least one hour of physical activity. Experts recommend a total of 60 minutes of moderate activity daily to help children achieve energy balance. Research shows that children who lack regular physical activity are at greater risk of obesity. Explore local parks and trails for fun, free activity. Take a walk around the neighborhood as a family, play "tag" or throw around a Frisbee. If you're stuck inside, turn on some music and have a dance-a-thon.

2 Spend two hours or less in front of the TV or computer screen. When children spend large amounts of time in front of a TV or computer screen, they tend to be less physically active. Experts recommend limiting TV viewing and other non-academic screen time to less than 2 hours per day to prevent obesity. So what can you do? Read stories together as a family or build a fort with pillows and blankets. Make chore time active family "together time:" rake leaves, wash the car, water the flowers, shovel snow.

DID YOU KNOW? In a year, the average child spends 900 hours in school and nearly 1,023 hours in front of a TV.

3 Eat three balanced meals. Growing school-age children need to eat three meals a day and have healthy snacks. Start every day off right with a healthy breakfast. Think protein and whole grains to keep you going strong all morning. Include the whole family in meal planning and preparation. Rotate favorite meals and age-appropriate duties such as salad chef or table setter.

DID YOU KNOW? When families eat together, children tend to eat more fruits, vegetables and milk and have less fried foods and soft drinks.

4 Drink four or more cups of water or low/no-calorie beverages. Drink calories count. Stick to water and other low or no calorie beverages to stay hydrated all day. Enhance the flavor of water with lemon slices, fresh berries, cucumber slices or mint leaves. Or try freezing them in ice cubes. For some added creativity, use

ice cube trays that come in different shapes, such as stars, animals, hearts and more. Heading out? Bring water bottles or other no/low-calorie beverages.

5 **Enjoy five or more servings of fruits and veggies.** Fruits and veggies are low in calories and provide valuable vitamins, minerals and fiber children need for good health. They may also help protect against obesity. Fruit kabobs, veggies with dip, and whole grain crackers with a variety of healthy toppings are popular crowd pleasers. What if your family isn't a huge fan of veggies? Try "sneaking" them into your favorite meals. Finely chopped spinach is easy to hide in lasagna, pizza, and spaghetti (try this in your meatballs too!). Diced carrots can be added to chili or ground meat to make burgers.

- Fruits and veggies — naturally fast food!**
- ✓ Buy lots of fresh, dried, and canned fruits (in own juice) and fresh veggies for snacking.
 - ✓ Pack washed and sliced fruit and veggies in clear bags, and place them in front of the refrigerator so kids can grab and eat.
 - ✓ Keep a bowl with clean fruit in a central area or leave a fruit salad in the refrigerator.

Start now! Gather your family together, review each of the five steps for achieving energy balance and create a plan to make the year healthy and fun for everyone.

For more information and additional tips on how to achieve energy balance as a family, please visit www.nrgbalance.org.