

Balancing Work and Family

Food for the Working Family

Is “eating on the run” a way of life for you and your family? Time for grocery shopping, cooking, and eating is often limited for working families. More meals are eaten away from home than ever before.

Today’s busy lifestyle demands meals and foods that are speedy, easy, and low-cost. Making sure that our food choices also give the most nourishment for the money spent can be a big challenge, too.



How Healthy Is Your Diet?

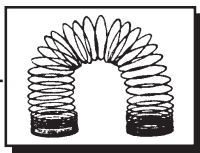
If you’re trying to eat right so you’ll look and feel your best, and you’re watching what you feed your family, check out this nutrition quiz. The answers are found on the reverse side.

1. For good nutrition, you need to eat three balanced meals a day. True or False?
2. Cottage cheese is one of the best sources of calcium. True or False?
3. What’s the best way to help your body absorb more iron from foods you eat?
4. Which one of these foods contains the least amount of dietary fiber: oatmeal, peanuts, steak, radishes, or oranges?
5. If you’re a strict vegetarian, what vitamin will you probably be lacking?

Eat Smart When Eating Out

Does fast food have to be fat food? Not if you make good choices at the fast food restaurant. What are some of the better choices?

- If you must have a burger, skip the sauce, cheese, and other condiments.
- Order pizza by the slice instead of the pan. Topping no-nos are extra cheese, sausage, and pepperoni. Better picks: onions, peppers, and mushrooms. Many pizza parlors feature salad bars; choose from the variety of fresh vegetables and avoid the high-fat dressings and salads swimming in dressing.
- Order a plain baked potato. Ask for low-fat yogurt on the side, or top with vegetables or salsa..
- Choose low-fat milk or fruit juice instead of a soft drink.
- Order a child’s portion. Smart fast food eating is not just a matter of what you eat. Eating slowly will help. The key is to savor your food, bite by bite.



Time Saving Strategies

Consider ways to cut time spent in daily meal preparation. Make every minute count when preparing food at home.

- Delegate tasks—assign specific duties to others.
- Use low cost convenience foods or make your own mixes.
- Try unattended cooking methods: slow cooker, oven with timer, timed outlet.
- Cook with the “quick” appliances: microwave oven, wok, pressure cooker, electric skillet.
- Prepare and freeze ahead meals, breads, and desserts.



Lunches to Go

Brown bag lunches can be a wonderful treat if they're planned with creativity and care. For a change of pace, mix or match some of the following ideas.

Frozen fruit—pack frozen and it will thaw by lunchtime. Try strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, peaches, cherries, grapefruit sections, or pineapple tidbits.

Soups—buy “no-salt added” or “reduced sodium” soups, or better yet, make soups at home, such as beef-potato soup, or vegetable soup. Carry in a thermos if you don't have a way to heat.

Brown bag chef's salad—save half the calories and fat of a typical chef's salad bought in a restaurant. Choose carefully the combination of toppings: raw vegetables; kidney beans; low-fat, low-sodium cheese; chicken instead of ham.

Cookies and crackers—choose lower fat cookies and crackers (melba toast, fig bars, graham crackers, gingersnaps, unsalted pretzels)... or make your own cookies, quick breads, muffins, or cupcakes with less sugar and fat. Use whole-grain flours and add shredded vegetables or chopped dried fruits.

School lunch—pack a school lunch assisted by your child. Let your child help with the grocery shopping as well as planning and preparing the bag lunch. Offer foods appropriate for the child's age. Always include one of your child's favorite foods even if it sometimes contains more sugar, sodium, or fat than you think is wise. Balance the meal with better choices at other meals during the day.

This publication and many others are available at

www.extension.iastate.edu

Answers to Nutrition Quiz

1. False. A balanced diet is what's most important; small meals and snacks, or combinations of the two are fine.
2. False. It's only a moderately good source of calcium; however, it's an excellent source of protein.
3. If you eat a vitamin C-rich food along with an iron containing food, you'll absorb more of the iron.
4. Steak. It's an animal food and only plant foods contain fiber.
5. Vitamin B12. It is found mainly in animal foods.

File: Family Life 8

Developed by Ohio Cooperative Extension Service for the Ohio State University by Ann W. Miller. Adapted for use in Iowa by Carol L. Hans, former extension nutrition specialist.

... and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of

discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.