
Family & Community Health “Connections” in Taylor County

Volume 14, Issue 8



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Back to School Tips for Families

Before it's time to head back to school, use these tips to help ensure your child has a safe, healthy and happy school year. Make the first day of school easier for you and your children.

- Take your child to visit the new school or classroom before the first day of school. Attend any orientations you can and take an opportunity to tour the school. Also consider taking your child to school a few days prior to class to play on the playground to help them feel comfortable. Many children get nervous about new situations, including changing to a new school, classroom or teacher. It can be helpful to rehearse heading into the new situation.
- Remind your child that teachers know that students may be nervous about the first day of school; they will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible. If your child seems nervous, ask them what they are worried about and help them problem-solve ways to master the new situation.
- Point out the fun aspects of school starting to help your child look forward to the first day of class. Talk about how they will see old friends and meet new ones, for example.
- Find another child in the neighborhood you child can walk to school or ride with on the bus. If you feel it is needed, drive your child (or walk with them) to school and pick them up on the first day. Get there early on the first day to cut down on unnecessary stress.

Develop a Healthy Sleep Routine

Help your child adjust to earlier bedtimes a week or two before the new school year starts, just to help them ease into new routines. Set a consistent bedtime for your child and stick with it every night. Getting enough sleep is critical for kids to stay healthy and be successful in school. Not getting enough sleep is linked with lower academic achievement, as well as higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness.

Create a bedtime routine that is consistent to help your child settle down and fall asleep. For example, a calming pre-bedtime routine may involve a bath/shower, reading with them, tucking them in and saying goodnight.

Have your child turn off electronic devices well before bedtime. Try to have the home as quiet and calm as possible when younger children are trying to fall asleep.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/gradeschool/school/Pages/Back-to-School-Tips.aspx>

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School Lunchbox

4-Week Meal Plan



Plan for safe travel to & from school. Review the basic rules with your student and practice any new routes or modes of transportation:

Taking the school bus

- **Remind your child to wait for the bus to stop** before approaching it from the curb. Kids should always board and exit the bus at locations that provide safe access to the bus or to the school building. Make sure your child walks where they can see the bus driver (which means the driver will be able to see them, too).
- **Remind your student to look both ways** to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street, just in case somebody does not stop as required. Encourage your child to actually practice how to cross the street several times before the first day of school.
- **If the school bus has lap/shoulder seat belts, make sure your child uses one** at all times when in the bus. (If your child's school bus does not have lap/shoulder belts, encourage the school system to buy or lease buses with lap/shoulder belts). See Where We Stand: Safety Restraints on the School Bus for more information. Your child should not move around on the bus.
- **Check on the school's policy regarding food on the bus.** Eating on the bus can present a problem for students with allergies and also lead to infestations of insects and vermin on the vehicles.
- **If your child has a chronic condition that could result in an emergency on the bus**, make sure you work with the school nurse or other school health personnel to have a bus emergency plan. If possible, do this before the first day of class.

Provide healthy food options during the school day.

- **Children who eat a nutritious breakfast function better.** They do better in school, and have better concentration and more energy. Some schools provide breakfast for children; if yours does not, make sure they eat a breakfast that contains some protein. If your child does not have time to eat, send them to school with a grab and go snack like a granola bar.
- **Many children qualify for free or reduced price food at school**, including breakfast. The forms for these services can be completed at the school office. Hunger will affect a child's performance in class.
- **Many school districts have plans which allow you to pay for meals through an online account.** Your child can get a card to "swipe" at the register. This is a convenient way to handle school meal accounts.
- **Look into what is offered inside and outside of the cafeteria**, including vending machines, a la carte, school stores, snack carts and fundraisers held during the school day. They should stock healthy choices such as fresh fruit, low-fat dairy products and water. Learn about your child's school wellness policy and get involved in school groups to put it into effect. Also, consider nutrition if your child will be bringing food to eat during school.
- **Choose healthier beverage options such as water** to send in your child's lunch. Each 12-ounce soft drink contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Drinking just one can of soda a day increases a child's risk of obesity by 60%.

lunch ideas



bagel with fruit and veggies + goldfish



pasta with broccoli + apples



wraps with veggies + fruit



pasta with veggies + cucumber



macaroni and cheese + fruit



sandwiches with veggies + fruit

What You Need to Know About the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines!



FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

2020-2025 DGAs

2 servings of fruit per day
2.5 servings of vegetables per day

2025-2030 DGAs

2 servings of fruit per day
3 servings of vegetables per day

1 serving is...

Vegetables: 1 cup raw or cooked; 2 cups leafy greens

Fruit: 1 cup raw; ½ cup dried

GRAINS

2020-2025 DGAs

6 servings per day
At least 3 of those whole grains

2025-2030 DGAs

2-4 servings of whole grains per day

1 serving is...

½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal; 1 slice bread, tortilla, or flatbread; about 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal

PROTEIN

2020-2025 DGAs

5.5 servings per day
Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, or dry beans

2025-2030 DGAs

3-4 servings per day
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, or dry beans (up to 12 ounces meat)

1 serving is...

1 ounce lean meats, poultry, or seafood
1 egg
½ cup cooked beans/tofu
1 Tbsp nut or seed butter
½ ounce nuts or seeds

1 serving is...

3 ounces cooked meat, poultry, or seafood
1 egg
½ cup cooked beans, peas, lentils
2 Tbsp nut or seed butter
1 ounce nuts or seeds

DAIRY

2020-2025 DGAs

3 servings per day
Fat-free or low-fat

2025-2030 DGAs

3 servings per day
Whole, reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free

1 serving is...

1 cup milk, yogurt, or fortified soymilk
1 ½ ounces natural cheese like cheddar or 2 ounces processed cheese

1 serving is...

1 cup milk or fortified soymilk
¾ cup yogurt
1 ounce cheese

WHAT DOES ONE SERVING LOOK LIKE?



1 ounce of cheese (one serving of dairy) = about 4 dice



3 ounces of meat (one serving of protein) = a deck of cards



1 ounce of nuts (one serving of protein) is about:
24 almonds
48 pistachios
14 walnut halves

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MEXICAN SKILLET MEAL

Prep time: 10 minutes | Cook time: 20 minutes | Cost per serving: \$1.00

INGREDIENTS

2 potatoes
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 medium tomato, chopped
1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon low sodium herb seasoning
4 eggs
1 cup cooked meat, chopped
1/2 cup grated low-fat cheddar cheese

UTENSILS

Medium saucepan
Cutting board and knife
Large skillet
Small bowl
Spoon

Note: Turkey or chicken works best for this recipe, although other meats can also be used.

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container
Serving size 1 cup (282g)

Amount per serving
Calories 270

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 10g	13%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 195mg	65%
Sodium 220mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 24g	9%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 3g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 22g	
Vitamin D 1mcg	6%
Calcium 112mg	8%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 747mg	15%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

WHAT TO DO

Wash your hands and clean your cooking area.

Wash potatoes and boil in a medium saucepan until tender, about 10 minutes. When cooked, chop potatoes and set aside.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook tomato, bell pepper and onion for 5 minutes. Add all spices to the vegetables.

In a bowl, mix eggs with a fork. Pour eggs in the skillet with the vegetables and stir continuously until eggs are cooked.

Add potatoes, meat and cheese to egg mixture. Heat until the cheese is melted and serve immediately. Enjoy!

Family & Community Health
"Connections" is provided by the
following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
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2026-2027 NEW 4-H YEAR

The new enrollment website TX4H
goes live on August 17th.

Enrollment Fees:

Student - \$20 by Oct. 31st : \$25 after then.
Adult Volunteers - \$10

NEW WEBSITE LINK

<https://tx4h.tamu.edu/>

If you have any questions about enrollments
please call the office at 325-672-6048 or email
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