

The Lunchbox Nutritionist *Kathleen Searles MS, RD, LDN*



A healthy family helps to create the foundation for a happy family. When mom, dad, kids, and everyone else around are healthy, things just seem to run smoother! When people feel good, it is easier to manage everything that life brings. However, creating a healthy family takes more than just making a bold resolution to "Be Healthy". To be healthy starts with the creation of good nutrition and lifestyle habits. These habits become part of your lifestyle and people who live a healthy lifestyle have a decreased risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. This month I am sharing with you 8 Habits for a Healthy Family, tips that I have found create the foundation for a healthier and happier family!

To your health,

- **Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN**

P.S. Creating a healthy lifestyle is so much easier than jumping on the newest deprivation diet! If you are ready to get started on your healthier lifestyle, contact me today for a personalized consultation.

8 Habits for a Healthy Family



1. **Eat Breakfast:** People who eat a healthy breakfast (blueberry donuts do not count!) are more mentally alert,

Sports Nutrition Corner

Crazy schedules are a big challenge when trying for healthy family eating habits. The typical family is juggling 1-2 jobs, school/religious/social activities, adult workout needs, and housekeeping. Throw in a couple of youth sports schedules and you may be wondering how to keep healthy habits going.

Here are a few tips that you may find helpful:

The best "pre-game meal" is a good basic daily diet. No special game day ritual will make up for a routine of "junk" foods.

As the article above notes, breakfast is indispensable, especially for youth

perform better at work, at school, and on the field, as well as have an easier time managing their weight than non-breakfast eaters. Breakfast is an excellent time to start the day with a nutrient packed power meal, by consuming fresh fruit and vegetables along with fiber packed complex carbohydrates, lean protein, and mono-unsaturated fats. Breakfast is especially critical for children and adolescents; therefore, it is important to start early with creating the habit of eating a healthy breakfast.

2. Set a Regular Grocery Date: One of the biggest challenges busy families face when it comes to meal time is not having the right ingredients on hand to whip up a quick and healthy meal. This usually results in the need to head to the nearest fast food pick up joint for a quick - and not so healthy meal. A regular grocery date will help ensure your fridge will always be stocked with healthy food for those very hectic days!

3. Prepare Meals in Advance: Along with setting a regular grocery date comes the important habit of meal planning in advance. Life is busy and few families have the luxury of being spontaneous during the work and school week to figure out “what’s for dinner”, shop for the necessary ingredients, and then cook the meal! Spend a little time over the weekend prepping food for the week and I can almost guarantee your week will run a whole lot smoother! Create a system that works for you.

Monday: Meatless Monday - Vegetarian Dish

Tuesday: Poultry or Fish Night

Wednesday: Soup or Chili

Thursday: Leftover Night!

Friday: Homemade pizzas, tacos, or breakfast for dinner

Leave the weekends for a little more impromptu eating and plan according to what is going on in your life. By following a system as the one above, it takes the stress off thinking you need to create something elaborate every week, while giving you the flexibility to mold the menu to your family likings. Try one new recipe a week and use family favorites for the other nights.

4. Involve the Whole Family In Meal Planning: Parents often feel the need to take on the weekly challenge of meal planning as a solo task, when in reality weekly meal planning should be something everyone (ages 5 and up) is involved in. If you have young children, have them participate at an early age by letting them browse through picture cookbooks and find meals that appeal to them. For adolescents, give them the responsibility of planning one meal a week. Involving the whole family at an early age helps create the habit of the importance of advanced meal planning. This also helps reduce the “I do not like this!” tantrums, as well as increase the overall nutrient profile and variety of foods served because everyone has a chance to give their input.

5. Eat at the Table: Creating the habit of eating together at the table sets the foundation for many healthy habits. In today’s fast paced, busy world it can be hard to sit down, slow down, eat and enjoy a meal together. But this is one old fashioned habit that

athletes.

Pack a cooler! You can bring healthy snacks for yourself and children that can double as pre or post game meals. Think of things like whole grain crackers, dried fruit, sliced oranges, bananas, cheese sticks, 100% juice boxes, shelf-stable milk boxes, and plenty of water.

Use game time as activity time. Don't watch passively on the sidelines or from the car. Get out and walk or jog around the field/venue while keeping track of your child's play. Counteract other sedentary parts of your day by standing up to watch.

If you have to resort to fast foods, order small or junior size entrees and supplement with side salads, fruit from your cooler, and milk or water instead of sugared drinks.

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Cereal Lovers: Recipe for a Lickety Split (Healthy) Breakfast!



A good breakfast can help your kids perform better at school. It can also help to promote a healthy weight and good behavior. But do not worry: preparing a smart breakfast does not need to be time consuming. You or your children can put cereal and milk on the table lickety split. Pick a nutritious cereal that is a good source of fiber. Look for at least three grams of fiber on the package's Nutrition Facts Label. Round out the meal, add interest, nutrition and staying power with

should be re-established as a regular part of your routine. Eating together helps people connect and share what is going on in one's life, it helps you relax, unwind, and create memories. Eating at the table also helps create the habit of mindful eating. When the TV is turned off and external distractions are put on mute (i.e. telephone, email, and text alerts), people are better able to pay attention to their internal hunger and fullness cues, helping to prevent mindless and over eating.

6. Snack on Fruits and Vegetables: When it comes to eating healthy we have all heard “snack on more fruits and vegetables!” But the reality is, as a society, we are accustomed to snacks coming in fancy pre-packed containers. Unfortunately our children are learning “snacks” come from a box and not Mother Earth; this is setting un-healthy habits from the start. We have the power to transform children's snack habits by simply having more fruits and vegetables readily available on a regular basis. Children learn what they live, therefore if fruit and vegetables are served as a snack from an early age, children will grow into adolescents and adults snacking on more fruits and vegetables!

7. Make Water the Go To Beverage: Creating the habit to drink more water is a simple but yet very important one. Here are some ways to increase your overall water intake and make it a family “habit”:

Drink a glass of water first thing when waking up...even before breakfast!

Serve water with meals.

Keep homemade fruit flavored water in the fridge (i.e.placing fresh fruit slices in a pitcher of water and letting it sit overnight). Have everyone carry their own water bottle around with them Dining out? Create the family habit to order water!

8. Pack Food the Night Before: Help your family create the daily habit of preparing for success by packing their meals and/or snacks the night before. When morning time comes it is easy to forget to make that turkey sandwich for lunch or grab some fruit, yogurt, and nuts for a midafternoon pick me up! But if you do so the night before, and make this part of your daily routine, it becomes a regular habit. Having your meals and snacks in a convenient location (i.e. cooler), will prevent a midafternoon fast food drive thru, helping everyone eat healthier as well as saving time and money. This is a habit that will serve your young adolescent children for many years to come!

10 Lifestyle Habits Worth Doing:

some of these toppings.

Strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, bananas, peaches, nectarines, kiwi, mango, apples, and cinnamon

Chopped nuts

Raisins, dried apricots, cranberries or cherries

Wheat germ and cinnamon

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Whole Grain Raspberry Breakfast Bar



Ingredients:

Raspberry Filling

1 package (6 ounces or 1 1/3 cup) Driscoll's Raspberries

1/4 cups sugar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Breakfast Bars

1 1/2 cups old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats

3/4 cups whole wheat flour

2/3 cups packed brown sugar

1/3 cups walnut pieces

1/4 cups wheat germ

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/3 cups canola or vegetable oil

1 large egg

Instructions:

Raspberry Filling

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Combine raspberries, sugar, cornstarch and lemon juice in a small saucepan.

Stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil.

Simmer, stirring constantly, 2 minutes until sauce is thick and translucent. Remove from heat.

Breakfast Bars



Take a daily walk or bike ride as a family.
Create a night time ritual with an early bed time.
Laugh more, yell less.
Do more outside.
Unwind with hot tea.
Complain less.
Take the stairs whenever possible.
Leave a few bites behind on your plate.
Brush your teeth after every meal.
Practice gratitude, on a daily basis.

11.

Quote of the Month:

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”

~ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Combine oats, flour, sugar, walnuts, wheat germ and cinnamon in a food processor.
Process until oats and walnuts are finely ground.
Add oil and egg; pulse to evenly combine, scraping sides of work bowl.
Press half of the crumb mixture evenly on bottom of a 9 x 9 inch baking pan.
Spread raspberry filling evenly over crumbs. Top with remaining crumbs and pat down gently.
Bake 25 minutes or until golden brown.
Cool completely in pan. Cut into bars.

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About Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN

I am a Registered Dietitian and am licensed to practice in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. The exciting field of nutrition has been my passion ever since I took a foods class with my friends in high school.

Through my work in different states and different settings I have developed my philosophy of helping people improve their diets by finding foods that fit into their particular routines, budgets, and preferences. I look forward to helping you solve your nutrition challenges with tasty and satisfying foods.