



Making Healthy Food Choices In Our Busy Lives

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You already know how important it is to make healthy food choices for you and your family. But how can you fit the best choices into your busy life?

You'll be pleased to discover that a hectic life *doesn't* mean that every meal has to be fast food on the run! Sometimes it's difficult to make healthy changes, but with a little planning and know-how, it can be done.

Here are some strategies to help you and your family make healthy choices:

- 1. Avoid temptation.** It's so easy to walk into the store with good intent, but walk out with bags full of unhealthy foods. Unfortunately, our wills are weak, especially if we've trained ourselves over the years to buy junk foods.
 - ***Never shop when you're hungry.*** This way you won't pick out unhealthy choices because they look good at the moment.
 - ***Get rid of the unhealthy foods in your home.*** If they aren't around, you won't be tempted to eat them.
 - ***Think of healthier alternatives to your family's favorite unhealthy foods.*** Rather ***than*** high calorie chips, try trail mixes or rice cakes. Low calorie puddings or frozen yogurts are better alternatives to higher fat ice creams.
- 2. Eat fast and healthy meals at home.** When you're tired at the end of the day and you realize you still have to feed the family, it's easy to go to a fast food chain and throw fast food on the table. It may save some time, but it won't save your health – or your pocket book!

- The great thing is that there are many easy, fast, and healthy foods you can make at home. This takes some planning, but you'll be more satisfied, save money, and be healthier as well.
- ***Look online for quick and easy recipes made with all natural ingredients.*** Many recipes can be made in 30 minutes or less and only have 5 ingredients. Taking the time to do some recipe research will save your sanity in the long run. Then once you find a hit with the family, store the recipe in a book or on your computer.
- 3. ***When you cook, make large batches and freeze the leftovers.*** This way, you'll already have meals in the freezer that you can just thaw, heat, and serve. No muss, no fuss! This is the opportune way to enjoy fast food at home.
- 4. ***Eat Slower.*** Since the brain takes about 20 minutes to get the signal that the stomach is full, if you eat too fast you'll pack in a lot more food than you need. When you're still thinking you're hungry, it's easy to make the wrong choices about food. If you slow down while you're eating, you'll eat less and you'll still feel full.
- ***Set a calming mood before sitting down for a meal.*** Avoid having the television on or eating as you're rushing the kids out the door to another activity. Sitting calmly at the table will allow everyone to relax and enjoy their meal.
- 5. ***Make dinner time a social experience.*** Dinner should be about enjoying your company and taking pleasure in the foods you're eating.

When you begin to look at mealtime as a social experience, it becomes easier to make the right choices about healthy foods. Suddenly you aren't so worried about rushing through and making it quick.

Dinner becomes a great experience when you're able to enjoy healthy foods together. Take time to eat as a family and enjoy a real conversation with each other. Talking will naturally slow down your eating pace, while also reconnecting you with your family members.

Using these techniques will bring all kinds of healthy benefits to your family and teach your children a healthy lifestyle. Healthy food choices are a possibility in your busy life if you take the time to plan ahead and make dinner time a priority in your home.