

SEPTEMBER 2021

Healthy Living

Did you know that September is Healthy Aging Month?



Successful aging means more than good health. It means taking charge of your personal well-being so that you can continue to live a vibrant, independent life, regardless of your age.

Keep your mind active

According to the National Institute on Aging, being intellectually engaged can potentially benefit the brain. Those who engage in meaningful activities, like volunteering or hobbies, say they feel happier and healthier.

Learning new skills may improve cognitive function as well. There are many activities that can keep your mind active:

- Read books and magazines
- Play games
- Take or teach a class
- Learn a new skill or hobby
- Work or volunteer

Learn more about various topics related to healthy aging by visiting www.nia.nih.gov/health.

10 Resolutions for Healthy Aging

1. **Get enough sleep.** Avoid frequent daytime naps, late night snacks, or screen time in bed.
2. **Eat the rainbow.** Vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables on your plate ensures you're getting the vitamins and minerals your body needs.
3. **Get checked out.** Catch up on any health screenings your doctor has recommended. Don't forget eye and dental check-ups.
4. **Manage stress.** It really is possible to worry yourself sick. Excessive worrying can lead to high blood pressure, digestive problems, chronic headaches, and unhealthy weight gain.
5. **Stay in touch.** Living alone doesn't mean being alone. Reach out to friends, neighbors, relatives.
6. **Move more.** Exercise improves heart health, and good heart health helps prevent a range of related disorders, including blood clots and depression.
7. **Read more.** You can "exercise your brain" with newspapers, books, magazines, or puzzles.
8. **Laugh and sing.** Is there a better way to enjoy life? And both will help you to worry less.
9. **Take control.** Be proactive about your own health. Ask your doctor questions about your health and for advice on positive lifestyle changes.
10. **Get involved.** Local organizations of all types need volunteers. Helping others is the best tonic for feeling good about yourself.



Back to School Healthy Lunch & Snack Ideas



A nutritious diet is very important to ensure children have the fuel they need to get through the school day. Here are some tips on how to make sure kids are getting the most out of the food they bring with them.

- 1. Include different food groups:** Fruit, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy are the five main food groups according to most nutritionists. It's important to balance between these groups, so that lunches and snacks include a healthy mix of nutrients like carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals.
- 2. Cook food in bulk:** To avoid panicking in the kitchen while packing before school, preparing large quantities of food on weekends and weekday evenings can save time to free up your mornings — and save you money.
- 3. Plan the lunch menu and prepare in advance:** If possible, planning lunches and snacks to pack in advance can help organize your week. Preparation can include cutting up vegetables, cleaning fruits, and portioning food into containers. Any efforts on the weekends and nights before school can help make sure healthy foods are packed and morning rushes are avoided.
- 4. Consider the container:** Investing in quality food containers and lunch bags can make sure lunches and snacks stay delicious, and also help avoid foodborne illness. When packing cold food, it's best to use an insulated lunch bag and ice packs. A thermos can also come in handy for packing warm food.
- 5. Involve children in the decision-making and preparation process:** It is important to pack foods that the child will actually eat, so consider their preferences when selecting healthy foods. Additionally, including children in the packing process can help foster independence and save time for the whole family.

School Lunch Ideas

A simple way to think about packing nutritionally balanced foods is by organizing the items into categories. The following categories can help guide the packing process by always including one of each. Here are some ideas for kid-friendly foods:

Main Meal

- Pita bread and hummus, cheese and crackers, turkey and cheese roll-ups, peanut butter and jelly sandwich, ham and cheese sandwich, pasta salad, meat and cheese kabobs, chips and guacamole, bagel and cream cheese, veggie and hummus wrap

Fruits/Veggies

- **Fruits:** Orange/apple slices, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, grapes, peaches, mangoes, melon slices
- **Veggies:** Baby carrots, cucumbers, grape tomatoes, edamame, snap peas

Sides/Snacks

- Chips/crackers, granola bars, pretzels, string cheese, yogurt cups, trail mix, dried fruits, popcorn, fruit cups, pudding cups, graham crackers

Drinks

- Water bottles, milk cartons, juice boxes, healthy smoothies