



5 Ways to Fall Back into Good Nutrition

For more information, contact the author – Carrie Miller, MS, RD, Extension Educator (cschneidermiller@unl.edu)

As the school year starts, it is often a challenge to fall back into a good routine. For some families, it can be a struggle to establish stricter bedtimes, agreeing on clothing that is appropriate for school, carving out time to do homework, and fitting in a nutritious dinner before jetting off to extra-curricular activities. Below are 5 ways for your family to fall into good nutrition during the school year.

- 1. Planning ahead is the best way to start.** Devote time each week to go through your calendar and look at the events scheduled. Decide how they may affect the time you have to prepare meals for your family. Then take time to plan out a menu for the week. Consider the foods you already have on hand so you may use them in your upcoming menu plans. Keeping basic foods on hand simplifies planning and shopping. Here are a few tips:
<http://go.unl.edu/47tm>
- 2. Prepare the night before.** For example, if Tuesdays are game nights and you only have 60 minutes between picking up your kids and getting them to a game, plan to have a meal ready that is easy to grab from home and go. Sometimes eating a meal in the car is the only way you can make it there on time. If you have a day like this, consider pre-making sandwiches or wraps the night before and including such items as easy to transport fruit, vegetables, drinks, and snacks. Try making wraps that include a variety of food groups such as these recipes: <http://go.unl.edu/tv75>
- 3. Make ahead and freeze meals.** Take time on the weekend to prepare some meals for the week. Some examples that freeze well include lasagna, enchiladas, and soups. This website is a great resource for learning the “how to’s” of freezing meals: <http://go.unl.edu/5gt9>
- 4. Simplify meals.** Meals don’t have to be fancy to be healthy. Many children prefer simple meals that don’t contain a lot of mixed ingredients. For example, on a grab and go night, put together a mix and match meal such as boiled eggs, cheese sticks, watermelon, baby carrots and whole-grain crackers. This meal is simple, fast, and it includes each of the 5 food groups. Find more mix and match meal planning strategies here: <http://go.unl.edu/q8df>
- 5. Include your children in meal and snack planning.** As you prepare your weekly menu and grocery list, ask your children to help. When you are at the grocery store, ask younger children to help put food in the cart. For older children have them help pick out the fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein, and whole grain foods you buy. These roles, big or small, will positively impact how likely they are to try nutritious foods.



For more great recipes ideas check out the following links:

- Nebraska Extension's Recipe Central: <http://food.unl.edu/recipe-central>
- Nutrition Know How: <http://www.nutritionknowhow.org/blog>

Sources:

1. Basic Foods for Cupboard, Fridge & Freezer, Nebraska Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/47tm>
2. Wraps: Quick, Tasty & Good for You, Too! Nebraska Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/tv75>
3. Freezing, Nebraska Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/5gt9>
4. "Mix and Match" Meal Planning Strategy, Nebraska Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/q8df>