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# HEALTHY CHOICES FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES

 Cooperative  
Extension Service



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## Reducing the risk of food allergies

**T**he number of food allergies has been rising, and it's normal to wonder about how food allergies could harm your child. Studies show that one in 13 children have food allergies; that is about two children in each classroom.

There are no mild or harsh food allergies — only mild to harsh reactions. Food that caused a mild result in the past may lead to a harsh result in the future, and vice versa. How a child reacts to food can be bad. That's why it's good to know the facts and what you can do to help cut your child's risk.

### What is a food allergy?

A food allergy result happens when the immune system attacks a food protein and mistakes it as a threat to the body. Watch for itching or swelling of the mouth, throat, face, or skin. You may also have trouble breathing or stomach pain. Loose



stools, or an upset belly are also signs. A bad food allergy can threaten life.

A doctor should decide whether you have a food allergy. You should not label yourself or your child with a food allergy. The only way to stop a

food allergy is to fully skip the food and any product that may have it.

Food intolerance does not affect the immune system. It is not the same as a food allergy. A child who is lactose intolerant (lacking the enzyme to break down a natural sugar in milk), may be able to eat or drink small amounts of dairy.

### Common allergens

About 8% of children in the U.S. have a food allergy. The most common food allergies in children are milk, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, and tree nuts. These foods, along with fish, crustacean shellfish, and sesame are most of all food allergy reactions. While your child may outgrow milk, egg, soy, or wheat allergies, food allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish tend to be for life.

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### Tips for reducing a child's risk of developing food allergies

Take special care with feeding habits during your child's first years. If a parent or brother or sister has an allergy, take steps to find out more about your child's risk. Certain feeding tips cannot promise a child will not get a food allergy but may help cut the risk.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says total nursing for the first three to four months lowers how often babies have itchy redness of the skin. If a mother breastfeeds beyond that time, even if it is not all the time, it may help against wheezing and lower the risk of asthma. Using soy-based baby formula does not appear to play a role in stopping allergies.

Waiting to start foods beyond 4 to 6 months of age does not appear to keep children from getting food allergies. In fact, research suggests slowing the start of likely allergy foods may even raise the risk of a food allergy.

Research suggests starting foods that have peanuts in forms safe for infants as early as 4 to 6 months of age. This could help stop a peanut allergy. For infants with harsh skin rashes or an egg allergy, testing may be needed before starting foods that have any form of peanuts. Be sure to talk with your child's doctor to see what is best for you and your baby. Call your baby's doctor right away if your baby reacts badly to food. Results could be quickly getting a skin condition, wheezing, vomiting, or diarrhea. Call the doctor if you have any reason to suspect a food allergy.

At this time, there is no proof to suggest avoiding certain foods (like fish, eggs, or peanuts) by mothers during pregnancy or while nursing will protect against food allergies.

For more information on food allergies, visit Food Allergy Research & Education at [foodallergy.org](http://foodallergy.org).

Adapted from [eatright.org](http://eatright.org)

Contributors: Dayle Hayes, MS, RD; Diane de Jesús, RD; and Sarah Klemm, RDN, CD, LDN

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## FOOD FACTS

### Stretch your food dollar with soups

**A** pot of homemade soup is healthy and a money saver. In winter, a steaming bowl of soup is comfort food in the purest sense. It is a great meal for helping to stay healthy. With veggies, whole grains, and lean proteins, homemade soup is a balanced one-pot meal.

By making and freezing batches of soups, you can save time and have a healthy dish when you want. Soups can be money savers because they don't call for pricey foods. Plus, you can load soups with veggies, giving your family the healthy meal, they need. Use canned, frozen, or fresh veggies, add some broth and turn on your slow cooker for a super soup dinner.

Making homemade soups can help you control what's in your food, such as less sodium.

Adapted from: Michigan State University Extension

## BASIC BUDGET BITES

### Are you overspending at the store?

**D**o you and your family know how much to budget monthly for groceries? A new tool is free on the UK Plan Eat Move website. It can help you find the cost for your family to eat healthy without breaking the bank. The Grocery Budget Calculator will show you how to enter your family's data. It will show you how much to budget for your household. Compare these findings to what you now spend on food. There are helpful ideas to make changes to your spending plan. Find the tool at <https://www.planeatmove.com/budget-calculator>. While looking at the website, don't forget to check out healthy, low-cost ways to help with meal planning.



Written by: Amy Singleton, MS, RDN; Source: [Planeatmove.com](http://Planeatmove.com)

## COOKING WITH KIDS

# Chicken and Dumpling Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped (including some leaves)
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 quarts fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups chicken breast, cooked and shredded
- 1/2 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 cup low-fat milk
- 1 egg
- 2 cups coarsely chopped fresh kale leaves (any greens can be used.)

1. In a large soup pot, sauté onions, celery, and carrots in olive oil over medium-low heat about 5 minutes or until tender.
2. Add broth, chicken, peppercorns, thyme, and bay leaves. Reduce heat to low. Simmer partially covered for 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix flour, baking powder, milk, and egg until well blended. Roll out with a rolling pin and make strips or simply drop small spoonful of dough into simmering soup.
4. Cover soup and allow dumplings to cook about 20 minutes. They will rise to the top of the soup as they cook.

5. Stir in kale, cover soup and simmer 5 additional minutes. Remove bay leaves and peppercorns before serving soup. Tip: If you'd rather not make dumplings, add egg noodles 8 minutes before serving.

Makes 10 servings  
Serving size: 2 cups

Nutrition facts per serving 200 calories, 4.5g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 40mg cholesterol, 390mg sodium, 25g carbohydrate, 2g dietary fiber, 4g total sugar, 0g added sugar, 13g protein, 0% Daily Value of vitamin D, 15% Daily Value of calcium, 10% Daily Value of iron, 6% Daily Value of potassium.

Source: University of Kentucky's Nutrition Education Program, Cook Together, Eat Together



## SMART TIPS

### Walking for wellness

**A**dults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-aerobic activity each week. Children should be active for at least 60 minutes each day. Being active can add to total health and cut the risk of long-term health issues such as heart disease, cancer, or high blood sugar.

Walking is a great way to stay active and in good health. Walking does not call for any special skills. You do not need to go to a gym or use high-priced gear. A single bout of mid-to-brisk walking can help with sleep and memory. Go on a walk today and ask your family to join you.

## RECIPE

### Autumn Sweet Potato Chili

- 1 can (15 ounces) sweet potatoes (do not drain)
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 jar (16 ounces) salsa
- 2 cans (15 ounces) black beans (do not drain)
- Water to achieve desired consistency
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- Fresh cilantro, chopped

1. Combine sweet potatoes, chili powder, and salsa in a large saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, and cook until heated through, stirring as needed.
3. Add beans with liquid and cook another 3 minutes to blend flavors.

4. Thin with water if needed. Heat through.
5. Serve with sour cream, cheese, and cilantro on the side.

Option: To reduce sodium, use vegetables canned without added salt.

Makes 8 servings  
Serving size: 1 cup

Nutrition facts per serving: 160 calories; 0g total fat; 0g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 0mg cholesterol; 790mg sodium; 32g carbohydrate; 9g fiber; 12g total sugar; 0g added sugars; 7g protein; 0% Daily Value of vitamin D; 4% Daily Value of calcium; 10% Daily Value of iron; 6% Daily Value of potassium.

Source: Jeffrey Hines, former Graphic Artist for Nutrition Education Program, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service





## PARENT CORNER

# Raising adventurous eaters

Is it a non-stop battle to get your little eaters to try new foods or eat their veggies? This is a common problem. Research tells us if you show children foods they are not used to, you can convince them to try the new foods. But it can take as many as eight to 15 times of showing the same food to a child before they will try it. Doing this over and over can help a child be ready to try, like, and eat healthy foods.

A recent study found that adding helpful tips when starting a new food can raise the chance of a child trying and liking new foods. Comments such as, “Eating carrots can help you see better in the dark,” or “Lentils can help you grow big and strong,” help children see how healthy food can help their bodies.

Written by: Amy Singleton, MS, RDN

Source: Lanigan, Jane, et al. “Child-Centered Nutrition Phrases Plus Repeated Exposure Increase Preschoolers’ Consumption of Healthful Foods, but Not Liking or Willingness to Try.” *Journal of nutrition education and behavior* 51.5 (2019): 519–527. Web.

## LOCAL EVENTS

**If you are interested in nutrition classes, contact your Extension office.**



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**[EXTENSION.CA.UKY.EDU/COUNTY](https://extension.ca.uky.edu/county)**