



## Nutrition Tips for a Balanced Diet

This starter guide is meant to aid your child towards a balanced diet with nutrient dense options. We recommend following up with a Registered Dietitian to help you create a customized meal plan based on their individual needs.

### **Meal Timing and Structure**

- Begin eating within 1 hour of waking and then every 3-4 hours
- Focus on 3 meals plus 2-3 snacks
  - Example: 8am **Breakfast**, 10am **Snack**, 12-1pm **Lunch**, 3pm **Snack**, 6-7pm **Dinner**, 8-9pm **Snack**
- Decrease stress at meals through games, reading, TV shows or movies
- Have a parent plate all meals and snacks

### **Nutrient Balance**

- Every meal needs to have sources of starches (carbohydrates), protein, and fat
- Snacks should be approximately 250-500 calories each and include a variety of foods
- Aim for a rotation of different meals and snacks throughout the week
- Avoid filling up on high volume, low calorie foods such as: most vegetables and fruits, low calorie or “light” foods (breads, wraps, yogurts, cheeses, bars, etc.)

### **Nutrient Dense Foods to Choose From**

- Avocados
- Bananas
- Breakfast cereals
- Butter & Margarine
- Corn
- Cottage Cheese, Full Fat
- Cream Cheese
- Cheddar Cheese OR Vegan Cheeses (Cashew or Coconut Oil based)
- Dried Fruits
- Eggs, Whole
- Granola (with nuts and dried fruit)
- Granola Bars
- Hummus & Bean Spreads
- Juice (100% juice, not diluted)
- Meal Replacement Shakes
- Milk Shakes & Smoothies
- Nut Butters (Peanut, Almond, etc.)
- Nuts & Seeds
- Oils (Olive, Avocado, Coconut)
- Pasta
- Potatoes & Sweet Potatoes
- Protein Bars
- Rice
- Trail Mix
- Whole Milk Yogurt

### **Sample Meals & Snacks**

- ☞ Breakfast: **Breakfast Burrito** (2 scrambled eggs, whole wheat tortilla, ¼ cup black beans, ¼ cup green pepper & onion, 1 oz cheddar cheese & 3 slices avocado), **Milk**, Whole or 2% (8 oz), **Mango** (1/2 cup)
- ☞ Snack: **Yogurt & Granola** (6 ounces full fat yogurt with ¼ cup granola, ½ cup fruit & 12-15 nuts)
- ☞ Lunch: **Chopped Greek Salad with Chicken** (4-5 ounces of chicken, 1-1 ½ cups chopped vegetables: cucumber, red onion, tomatoes, 2 tbsp olive oil-based dressing, ¼ of an avocado), **Toasted Pita Breads** (two 4-inch), **Milk**, Whole or 2% (8 oz)
- ☞ Snack: **Peanut Butter & Banana Sandwich** (2 pieces of bread + 2 tbsp peanut butter and 1 sliced banana)
- ☞ Dinner: **Chili with Ground Beef, Beans & Cheddar Cheese** (1 ½ cups chili, 2 ounces of cheddar cheese), **Cornbread** (2x2 square of cornbread, 1 tsp butter or margarine), **Milk**, Whole or 2% (8 oz)
- ☞ Snack: **Ice Cream & Milk** (1/2 cup full fat ice cream, 8 ounce of milk)