

Nutrition

Eat the rainbow!

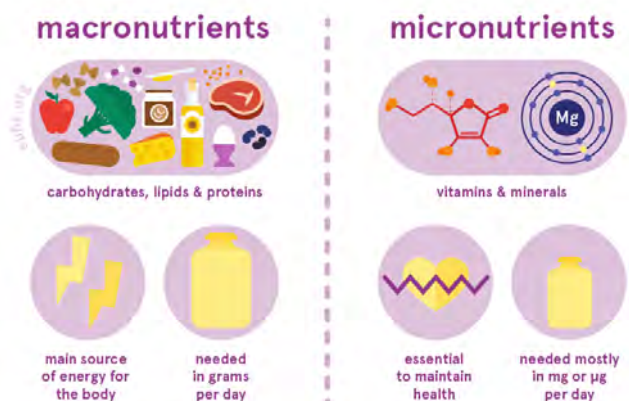


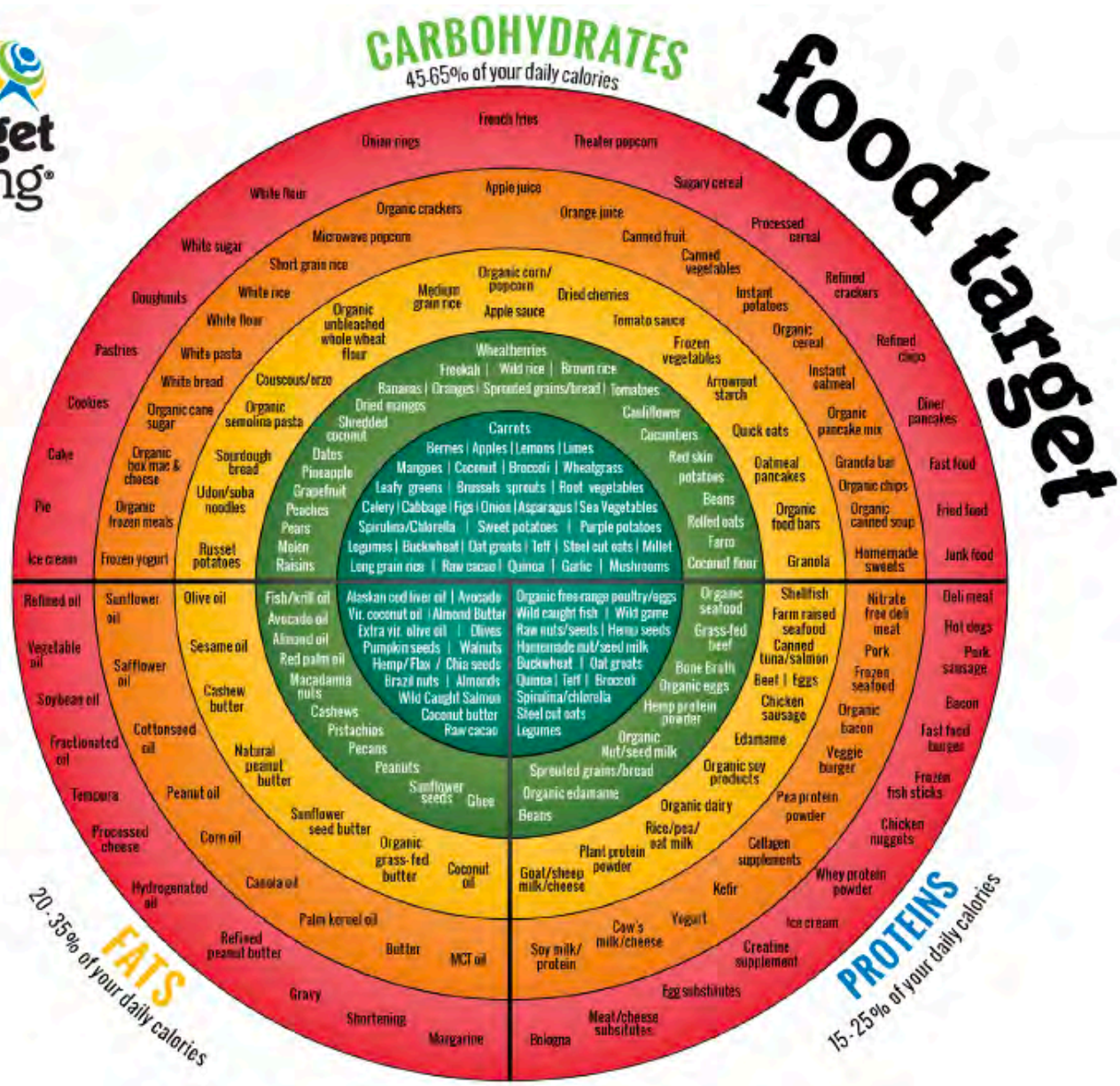
Healthy Eating

Nutrition plays an important role in our lives. We need to be dialed in more than ever right now! Nutrition is what gives us energy. We want to fuel our bodies with nutrient-rich foods so we can continue to go the extra mile. Especially, right now, when our stress and emotions are at an all-time high. Our youth should be educated and taught in this same manner. Physical activity feeds off nutrition. Learn how physical activity can be enhanced by what we eat. Remember, we will never be perfect but just trying your best is all that anyone can ask. Be ready to experiment with recipes your family can use to create wonderful memories while using nutritional ingredients. In a nutshell, this module has various types of information to work on our nutrition. We can always do better. Get ready to Think together, Move together and Be together! [Click here](#) to watch an introductory video discussing the importance of health eating.

Think Together!

At the foundation of nutrition are nutrients. The food that we eat is composed of nutrients. Nutrients are broken down into two subgroups: Macronutrients and Micronutrients. Think of macronutrients as the main nutrients that make up the framework of our foods. Macronutrients are divided into three subgroups which include: carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Micronutrients are one of the major groups of nutrients your body needs. They include vitamins and minerals. Vitamins are necessary for energy production, immune function, blood clotting and other functions. Meanwhile, minerals play an important role in growth, bone health, fluid balance and several other processes. [Click here](#) to learn more about the difference between macronutrients and micronutrients.





Food Target and You!

When you see this food target what do you think of? What foods do you eat most? This target is filled with foods you can eat. But eating from the center out will give you the most bang for your buck. For example, why drink apple juice when you can eat an apple? It will save you calories and tons of added sugar. Not to mention it will help your digestive tract. There are so many foods you can eat. Remember, it doesn't hurt to try something new! [Click here](#) to learn about A-to-Z fruits and see if there's a new fruit you'd like to try!

Positive thinking and eating outside your comfort zone can be done. The focus is on the WHY. WHY would you want to eat specific foods (or want your child(ren) to eat specific foods?). Better food decisions lead to more energy, brain function and mood, and less chronic diseases. And to be honest, finding your WHY will make your new way of eating a healthy habit. A long-term habit. Not something that is short-lived, like a diet. [Click here](#) to watch a video by Dr. Mike Evans answering the question: What is the Best Diet?

Your Brain and Food

We are always using our brains. It controls our thoughts and movements, breathing, heartbeat and senses. We are even using our brains when we sleep! With that being said, our brain always requires “fuel”. This “fuel” comes from the foods we eat. It’s what’s in the “fuel” that makes the difference. Put simply, what you eat directly affects the structure and function of your brain and, ultimately, your mood. [Click here](#) to learn about 7 foods that are important for child health and development.



Eating from the center of the Food Target will nourish the brain and protect it from things like stress. In addition, the foods you eat affect how you feel. Serotonin is a naturally occurring substance that functions as a [neurotransmitter](#) to carry signals between nerve cells (called [neurons](#)) throughout your body. Although most [serotonin](#) is found in your gut and not in your brain, it functions to promote healthy digestion, sleep, bone health, and blood clotting. [Click here](#) to learn more about how the food you eat affects your brain.

Eating the right foods is also important for exercise. Eating well-balanced meals and/or snacks can help you get the calories and nutrients you need to fuel your daily activities, including regular exercise.

Breakfast

The first meal of the day is the most important! According to an article published in [Harvard Health Letter](#), eating breakfast regularly has been linked to a lower risk of [obesity](#), [diabetes](#), and [heart disease](#). Starting your day with a healthy meal can help replenish your blood sugar, which your body needs to power your muscles and brain.

- It is easy to grab a bagel or doughnut. However, it will not keep you feeling full for long. Instead of eating sugar-laden cereals made from refined grains, try oatmeal, oat bran, or other whole-grain cereals that are high in fiber. Then, throw in some protein, such as milk, yogurt, or chopped nuts. If you prefer toast, choose whole-grain bread. Then pair it with an egg, peanut butter, or another protein source.

Lunch/Dinner

No single menu is fit for everyone. Avoiding processed foods and added sugars, and favor whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. Individual dietary requirements vary, according to a person’s desired weight, activity levels, sex, and age.

Suggestions for Lunch/dinner meals:

- Half the plate to contain non-starchy vegetables
- Leafy greens and raw salads
- Each meal has a source of lean protein
- Limit carbs and starchy vegetables, such as potatoes, no more than a quarter of the plate
- Healthy fats, such as avocados, olive oil nuts, and seeds, and make sure that their portions are limited.

Snacks

Snacks should be eaten on a limited basis. Snacks should be eaten after breakfast, lunch, and dinner. These snacks are a great way to satisfy that hunger and get all the vitamins and nutrients your body needs. As with everything, moderation is the key to smart snacking. People who eat regular meals and healthy snacks are less likely to overeat and gain weight than people who skip meals or go for long periods without eating and then scarf down a large order of fries. [Click here](#) to learn about a few more healthy snacking ideas.

Suggestions for smart snacking:

- Prepare healthy snacks in advance
- Keep healthy snacks with you
- Make it interesting
- Satisfy cravings with healthier approaches
- Read serving size information



Move Together!

Exercise means playing and being physically active. We need to move as adults and our children need to move. It doesn't need to be in a fitness/gym setting. With many offices, schools and programs shut down because of Covid-19 we find ourselves not leaving our living quarters. We can still move our body anywhere!

There are many benefits to exercise:

- Stronger muscles and bones
- leaner bodies
- less risk of becoming over-weight
- a lower chance of getting type 2 diabetes
- lower blood pressure and
- Lower blood cholesterol levels
- and a better outlook on life.

Exercising as a family creates memories and long-lasting, healthy habits. What is your family's favorite family activity to do together? [Click here](#) to learn more about feeling good through movement and exercise!



Children need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day, but it doesn't have to occur at once. It all adds up! And remember, sleep is just as important and is an essential part of living an active life. A recent study found that with each extra hour of sleep, the risk of a child being overweight or obese dropped by nine percent. [Click here](#) to find a few activities and steps that you and your family can consider to get started on a path to a healthier lifestyle!

Every family needs balance. What is Energy Balance? Energy is another word for “calories” or food intake. Your energy balance is the balance of calories consumed through eating and drinking compared to calories burned through physical activity, at rest (RMR) and during digestion (TEF). What you eat and drink is ENERGY INTAKE. What you burn through physical activity is part of ENERGY EXPENDITURE. Balance looks different for every individual and family member. Work with your physician to figure out what is a healthy balance for you and your child.



Be Together!

Quick Tips: Help Your Family Eat Healthier

Any food hack you can get your hands on is a win! Saving time during our busy schedule is always eye appealing. Prepping and planning your meals/snacks ahead of time is so helpful. Also, it sets you and your family up for success. Involving your whole family in the cooking process is very important. Although it may take more energy, the memories are worth it! In addition, your kids will feel a certain sense of accomplishment. Try these healthy and kid friendly recipes that your kids are sure to enjoy:

- [30 Easy Recipes Kids Will Love](#)
- [3 Easy Snacks Kids Can Make](#)
- [3 Breakfasts Your Kids Can Cook Themselves](#)
- [Lunch Ideas for Kids](#)
- [Berries and Spinach Fruit Smoothie](#)
- [Veggie Scramble](#)
- [Apples & Cinnamon Oatmeal](#)
- [Healthy Tuna Salad](#)
- [Sweet Potato Fries](#)
- [Oatmeal on the Run](#)



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Natalie Queen has been teaching for over 20 years. She has a Master’s Degree in School Guidance Counseling. She also has her undergrad degrees in Emotional Impairment, Family & Consumer Sciences, and Physical Education. One of Natalie’s passions is teaching fitness classes. Her top priority is her family (Lance, Jade, and Jude.) Officiating women’s college basketball is another fan favorite for Natalie. If Natalie could give you one piece of advice it would be, ”Just keep moving!”