



# Growing Together: Food, Family and Friends

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## Let's Move as a Family

Nutrition and physical activity go hand in hand in the growth and development of children. April is "Move More Month."

If you have children and teens in your family, you might find it challenging to move them away from technology or TV. Why is that so important?

Children need to move throughout the day – aiming for 60 minutes per day – to grow and develop. It can improve their sleep and their mood.

Fitness experts recommend an hour of physical activity daily, including bone- and muscle-strengthening activities and aerobic activities that strengthen the heart. Climbing strengthens muscles, while running and jumping strengthen bones.

What can a parent do?

- Enjoy a family walk or bike ride after dinner to discuss how the day went.
- Set limits on technology time.
- Go on a nature walk, jog or run. Can they hop like a bunny or scamper like a squirrel on your route?
- Set up a backyard obstacle course. Use your phone or a stopwatch to time them.
- Consider doing yardwork and gardening activities in the spring. Depending on their age, children might be able to help move pots or mow sections of the lawn or help with spring cleanup. Be sure they have closed-toe shoes, long pants and gloves.



Many kids do not eat enough fruit and calcium-rich foods and beverages. Here's an easy recipe they can make on their own for a post-activity snack. See [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food) for more recipes.

## Berry Tasty Yogurt Parfaits

2 cups fruit (fresh or frozen) such as strawberries, blueberries or blackberries  
2 cups vanilla yogurt  
4 tablespoons crunchy granola cereal

Rinse and prepare fresh fruit or thaw briefly in the microwave oven. Layer  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of fruit in the bottom of four glasses, top with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup yogurt, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fruit and top with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup yogurt. Top with 1 tablespoon cereal.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 0.5 grams (g) fat, 4 g protein, 33 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 60 milligrams sodium.

# Connect

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## Families, Fitness and Fun

Healthy living is most often supported by a set of choices people make about their daily physical activities and nutrition. Being healthy is also facilitated by the supportive environment that families establish for physical activity, good nutrition and time together. The union of “family time, fitness and fun” provides families with the opportunity to strengthen relationships, improve health and increase enjoyment of the benefits of healthy living. Here are three key points to pursue:

- **Turn off the “electronic competition” (TV, video games, etc.) and turn on the “outdoor competition” by engaging in outside physical activities together.** Families and children have limited time to spend together each day. Walking, riding bikes and playing games outside furnish both family time and opportunities for daily physical activity. Instead of letting family time get locked up by electronic gadgets, put some “outside time” on the daily family schedule (as weather cooperates) and then head outside for some old-fashioned physical interaction and fun.
- **Mix different opportunities for physical activity of family members in a setting so that all can participate and to encourage a “multifitness” approach.** It is possible to engage multiple types of physical activity if a family goes on a walk together, children ride

bikes, parents and children throw a ball or Frisbee back and forth along the way, and stop to play on the swings or other play equipment at the park. Think of how you might encourage an approach that allows for multiple types of physical activity that can engage all family members along the way.

- **Families that play together are more likely to stay together.** Active play is one of the best ways to promote family fitness and fun. Pursue physical activities that involve play and active effort, such as tag, basketball, pickleball, swimming, hiking, walking, riding bikes or any other meaningful physical activity.
- **Connect while you spend time in physical activity together.** Here are three great question prompts for connecting while on a walk or bike ride: 1) What is your favorite family activity memory? 2) What outdoor activity would you like to plan together for the coming spring and summer? 3) Do you have any memorable experiences from participating in sports competitions?

These tips provide a starting point for families to consider ways to improve their family fitness and fun together.

## Savor (the Savings)

Kids’ activities such as sports or dance usually mean buying lots of shoes, protective gear, balls and other equipment – and the costs can add up. Many secondhand stores and online marketplaces offer gently used equipment at reduced prices. Check out yard sales, or reach out to friends with slightly older children. Some programs allow you to rent equipment.

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