



# Growing Together: Food, Family and Friends

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This month's newsletter dives into two topics that affect kids every day: how protein fuels their growing bodies, and how they adjust to new school routines without cell phones.

## EAT

Growing kids need nourishing food, including protein and all the food groups. Children who are more active need more food, including protein.

Protein needs for children who get less than 30 minutes of daily physical activity:

- Children 2-3 years: 2-ounce equivalents
- Children 4-8 years: 4-ounce equivalents
- Girls 9-18 years: 5-ounce equivalents
- Boys 9-13 years: 5-ounce equivalents
- Boys 14-18 years: 6.5-ounce equivalents

An ounce equivalent is:

- 1 ounce cooked lean beef, pork, chicken or fish (about the size of four dice)
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- ½ ounce nuts or seeds (small handful or about 25 peanuts; golf ball size)
- ¼ cup of cooked beans such as kidney or navy beans
- ¼ cup of tofu



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- Enjoy a variety of foods and check out the recipes at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food).
- See **“Become a Pro with Protein”** from NDSU Extension for more information about protein needs.

See [www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan](http://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan) for a personalized nutrition plan for any member of your family.

Here's a kid-friendly snack that's ready in minutes and perfect for after school.



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## 3-ingredient Salsa

- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 ½ cups canned corn, drained and rinsed (or use leftover cooked, refrigerated corn)
- 2 cups salsa of choice

Mix ingredients and refrigerate. Serve as a dip with whole grain tortilla chips.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 110 calories, 0.5 grams (g) of fat, 21 g carbohydrate, 6 g protein and 470 milligrams sodium.

# Connect

## Helping Kids Navigate Change: Adjusting to the New School Cell Phone Policy

Change can be hard — for kids and adults alike. This school year, North Dakota schools have a new policy: no cell phones during the instructional day. While this shift may feel uncomfortable at first, it's also an opportunity for students to learn resilience, flexibility and healthy habits that will benefit them for life.

### Why Change Can Feel Tricky

When something familiar is taken away — like having a phone nearby — kids may feel uncertain, frustrated or even a little anxious. These feelings are normal. As parents, we can help by offering reassurance, understanding and practical support during the transition.

### Helping Your Child Adjust

#### 1. Listen First

Listen to your child to share how they feel about the change. Simply saying, *“I hear you — it’s different, and that can be hard”* can go a long way toward making them feel understood.

#### 2. Focus on the Positives

Talk about the benefits: more focus in class, stronger friendships and a break from the constant pings and pressures of social media.

#### 3. Make a Plan Together

Decide when and how your child can use their phone before and after school. Having clear routines reduces uncertainty and helps them feel in control.

#### 4. Offer Alternatives

If they used their phone for certain tasks (checking time, taking notes), help them find substitutes, like a watch or a small notebook.

#### 5. Model Adaptability

Kids learn how to handle change by watching us. Share a story about a time you had to adjust to something new, and how you made it work.

## Encouraging Resilience

Every change is a chance for kids to practice problem-solving and adaptability — skills they’ll need far beyond the classroom. Remind them that feeling uneasy at first is normal, but that over time, this new routine will become second nature.

## We’re All in This Together

The school’s goal — and yours — is to help students succeed, not only academically but socially and emotionally. By supporting them through this adjustment, we’re giving them the tools to face future changes with confidence.

## Savor (the Savings)

Just as we fuel our bodies with healthy foods, keeping our phones clean helps protect our health, too. Cell phones can harbor germs. Researchers examined microbiological data from 56 studies conducted in 24 countries. Of those 56 studies, 54 identified bacteria on phones including staph, E. coli and bacillus species. They also noted fungus.

- Clean phones according to your phone manufacturer’s recommendations. That usually means using an alcohol-based sanitizer wipe and avoiding getting any moisture in the ports.

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