

Energy Balance and Physical Activity

This month we discussed the importance of energy balance: balancing the energy from food with the energy needed for physical activity and basic body functions. It is important to match the energy in to the energy out. The body has a unique way of regulating energy through signs of hunger and satiety. The more active one is the greater amounts of energy and nutrients needed.

Carbohydrates are an important source of energy when part of a well balanced diet.

- Carbohydrates give us quick energy and fiber which helps us feel full and keeps our digestive tract healthy
- Whole food carbohydrates provide the best energy
- Found in all 5 food groups, **grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein.**
- Some examples are fruits, vegetables, whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, whole-grain bread, cereal and beans.



Photo from USDA

Exercise is essential. Regular exercise helps us strengthen our hearts, lungs, and muscles so that we stay healthy and strong.

It is recommended that we get at least 60 minutes of exercise a day. While that may seem like a lot, there are lots of fun activities you can do as a family to exercise together.



Aerobic activities strengthen your heart. Examples include jumping rope, playing basketball, throwing a Frisbee, doing jumping jacks, jogging, biking, or having a dance party.

Strength Training increases the amount of muscle in your body. Examples include lifting actual weights or food cans, lunges, squats, push-ups and planks, and core lifts.



Stretching keeps our muscles and body flexible. Focus on stretching a little every day for at least five minutes. Examples include yoga, reaching to the sky, touching your toes, clasping your hand or elbows behind your back, or stretching your arms and feet wide apart in a giant star shape.