

## Lesson 4

# Planning Meals and Snacks

### Guide to Reading

#### ● Building Vocabulary

As you read this lesson, write the two new highlighted terms and their definitions in your notebook.

- empty calorie foods (p. 249)
- nutrient density (p. 250)

#### ● Focusing on the Main Ideas

In this lesson, you will learn to

- **explain** why breakfast is important.
- **describe** meal planning tips.
- **identify** healthy ways to snack.

#### ● Reading Strategy

**Finding the Main Idea** For each of main sections in this lesson, write one sentence that states the main idea in the section.

### Quick Write

Write a short description of your favorite snack and when you tend to eat it.

- ▼ A healthful breakfast gives you energy that lasts throughout the morning. **Why is this important for teens in particular?**

## Planning Healthy Meals

The advice in the MyPyramid food guidance system can be summed up by the three words *variety*, *moderation*, and *balance*. Variety, as you have seen, can make your meals and snacks more nutritious and interesting. Moderation, which includes eating reasonable portions and limiting fats, sugars, and salt, can lower your risk of developing certain diseases. Balance, which means being careful not to eat more calories than your body can burn, can help you maintain a healthy weight.

In this lesson you will see how these ideas can be applied to planning healthful meals and snacks. You will learn ways to eat well, both at home and on the go.

### Breakfast: Start the Day Out Right

Breakfast has been called the most important meal of the day, and for good reason. After a night of sleep, in which your body rests and repairs itself, you need breakfast to turn your body's fuel-producing mechanism back on. Breakfast gets the body going and provides the fuel you will need later in the morning. This fuel helps you to



stay alert so you can concentrate in school. Research suggests that students who make time for breakfast are less likely to be absent or late for school. They also tend to do better academically than teens who do not eat breakfast.

When planning breakfast or any meal, remember that any food that supplies calories and nutrients can be part of a healthful breakfast. Round out your meal with a cup of fruit and a glass of low-fat milk. Trail mixes and packaged breakfast bars can also be good as long as the sugar content is not too high. The Nutrition Facts label on the wrapper of a breakfast bar will tell you how much sugar the bar contains.

### Reading Check

**Give Examples** What are some ways you can make breakfast more interesting?

## Lunch and Dinner

For most Americans, lunch is a relatively small meal and dinner is large. In other cultures, the opposite is true: the largest meal is consumed at lunchtime. Instead of eating large meals, try eating four or five small meals spread out over the whole day. This will help keep your body burning calories throughout the day. Aim for variety, moderation, and balance in your food choices. By doing so, you will be planning for good health and taking measures to help prevent disease. Here are some suggestions:

- **Vary your proteins.** As a growing teen you need about five 1-ounce servings of meat and beans daily. If you are bored with regular sandwich fillings, try a fish like salmon or a nut butter made from something other than peanuts.
- **Use limited amounts of fats, sugars, and salt.** If you are someone who really likes dessert, try substituting fresh fruit or yogurt for empty-calorie foods like cake and cookies.

**Empty-calorie foods** are foods that offer few, if any, nutrients but do supply calories.

- **Balance your eating plan.** Use a food log to write down what and how much you eat. This will help you identify which food groups you are eating too little of or too much of. Keeping track of what you eat will also give you a good idea of how many calories you are taking in.

▼ Eating well-balanced meals will give your body the nutrients it needs and keep you feeling healthy. **How can you plan a meal that includes a variety of food items?**



If you are eating more calories than your body can burn during your daily activities, you may want to cut back on calories or increase your exercise. Your eating habits may show you ways you can balance your eating plan and prevent disease and health problems.

### Snacking Smart

During adolescence, your body is growing rapidly. Snacking can help you meet your nutritional needs during this period of change, especially if you choose healthy snacks.

When you snack, pay attention to what you are eating. Eating absent-mindedly can lead to overeating. Also, avoid snacking just before mealtime so that you will be able to eat your regular meal.

As for *what* to eat, remember to choose healthy foods. Healthy snacks will provide your body with important nutrients. Foods that have more nutrients than calories are considered nutrient-dense. **Nutrient density** is the amount of nutrients relative to the number of calories they provide. The more nutrients a food has in relation to calories, the more nutrient-dense it is. **Figure 10.6** provides some specific ideas for nutrient-dense snacks. You can probably add some snack ideas of your own.

 **Reading Check** Define What is nutrient density?

### Eating Out, Eating Right

Choosing nutritious foods and controlling your portion sizes are important strategies for maintaining your health and preventing future health problems. This can often be challenging when eating out. Portions of food tend to be larger at restaurants. Another challenge is not knowing what is in a dish.

 **FIGURE 10.6**

### SOME SMART SNACKS

Snacking can help you meet your nutritional needs during the teen years. **What other foods do you enjoy eating that would make healthful snacks?**

Food	Calories from Fat	Food Group Equivalent
Air-popped popcorn, plain, 1 cup	0	1 cup Grains
Applesauce, ½ cup	0	½ cup Fruit
Gelatin with ½ cup sliced banana	0	½ cup Fruit
Graham crackers, 2	2	1 ounce Grains
1½ ounces of low-fat cheese and 4 saltines	52	1 ounce Grains, 1 cup Milk

When it comes to portion control, try ordering an appetizer as your meal. These are usually smaller servings. Just make sure you choose a dish that is nutrient-dense. If you do decide to order a main course, eat only half and take the other half home for a later meal. Make sure to refrigerate your leftovers as soon as you get home so they do not spoil.

Here are some other tips to help you eat healthy in restaurants:

- Check the menu for heart-healthy selections. Many restaurant menus feature dishes approved by the American Heart Association. These items appear with a small red heart next to them.
- Select foods that are grilled, broiled, or roasted, instead of fried. These foods usually contain less fat.
- Ask for salad dressing on the side. Use just enough to flavor the greens without smothering them. Do the same with sauces, gravies, and other toppings.



▲ Try to choose healthful foods when eating out. **What descriptions on a menu can tell you whether a food item is healthful?**

## Lesson 4 Review

### After You Read

Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

#### What I Learned

1. **Vocabulary** What makes a food an *empty-calorie food*?
2. **Recall** Why is breakfast important?
3. **Identify** Give three meal-planning tips that can add variety, moderation, and balance to your eating plan.

#### Thinking Critically

4. **Explain** How can you avoid overeating when you eat at a restaurant?

5. **Apply** You are hungry, but dinner is still an hour away. Can you think of a snack that would help you feel less hungry but still leave you ready to eat dinner? How much of the snack food do you think you should eat?

#### Applying Health Skills

6. **Practice Healthful Behaviors** Keep a food log for two days. Record every food you eat and the nutrients that each food contains. Identify ways to improve your eating habits.