7 Ways to Inspire Those Around You to Eat Healthier
Are you the “health nut” of your family? I am. You might be, too, if you can relate to the following: Your health is very important to you. You know how to nourish your body with whole foods, but no one else in your home seems to notice or care about what they eat. And this can feel frustrating. Sound familiar yet?

Because you love your family, you want them to feel healthy & energized. You want them to choose healthful meal options. You want them to value their health as much as you do. But how? Getting your family on board with healthful eating may seem daunting, especially on nights when chicken nuggets & mac & cheese are the only things that get eaten at the dinner table. But the good news is that there are many simple ways to inspire those around you to eat healthier. I know these work because I’ve seen the results in both my own family and also in the lives of my friends and health coaching clients. Choose a few of these tried-and-true ideas from the list below to get started in your own home!

1. Do the grocery shopping yourself. If you’re not already the primary grocery shopper for your family, I highly recommend that you volunteer to be that person. This will give you more control over what kinds of foods end up in your home. For example, you’ll be able to reduce the amount of processed food you buy, you’ll be able to choose organic over conventional produce, and you’ll be able to guarantee that many healthful food options for your family end up in your home. Doing the shopping yourself might also mean by yourself, especially if you find that having other family members along distracts you from reading labels and pressures you to buy unhealthful food that you wouldn’t choose otherwise.

2. Plan meals (& cook!) together. Involving the whole family in meal planning is a fun way to help develop healthy eating habits. If you give your family members choices about what they eat, they are much more likely to get excited about trying new & healthy foods. Make it a fun family activity by pulling out a bunch of cookbooks with healthful meal options and letting each family member choose a meal for that week. Take it a step further by cooking those meals together. Not only is cooking at home usually healthier than eating out, but it also helps give kids (and adults) a better appreciation of where their food comes from.

3. Start simple: with water! One of the most important ways to improve and/or maintain health is by staying hydrated. Encouraging your family to drink more water is a simple first step towards helping them live a healthier lifestyle. If your family is underwhelmed by drinking plain tap water, try adding some flavors with natural ingredients like ginger, mint, cucumbers, citrus, berries, etc. You could also inspire more water drinking by having each family member choose their own special water bottle that they can take with them wherever they go.

4. Add superfoods to family favorites. Baby steps towards healthier eating are going to be far more sustainable than making huge changes all at once. So instead of overhauling your family’s meals drastically, start by adding superfoods to family favorites. Here are a few practical examples:

- Sprinkle some chia seeds on morning yogurt or cereal. The chia seeds won’t change the taste, but they’ll add a ton of nutrients to your family’s breakfast. Win-win, right?

- Add avocado or sprouts to sandwiches. Maybe in an ideal world, you’d like to nix the white bread, lunch meat, cheese-filled sandwiches your significant other packs for lunch. However, speaking from personal experience, I suggest to opt for a little compromise. While my husband might refuse to eat a salad every day, he’s happy to add things like avocado, sprouts, arugula, and chia seeds to his favorite turkey sandwich.

- Substitute almond butter instead of peanut butter. Simple substitutions like this one can make a huge impact on health. Almonds are full of good fat, protein, Vitamin E, and other compounds that can help lower cholesterol and promote a healthy heart and mind. The same can’t be said of peanuts which are highly sprayed with chemicals, more allergy-inducing, and not nearly as nutrient-dense.

- Cook with healthy oils. Your family probably isn’t going to notice if you suddenly start using coconut oil instead of canola
oil in their favorite baked goods, but their bodies will thank you later. Choosing quality fats to cook with, like coconut oil, extra virgin olive oil, grass-fed butter, avocado oil, etc. can drastically improve the health benefits of your family’s favorite meals. Coconut oil is a personal favorite of mine for cooking and baking because it’s so versatile and can withstand high heat without becoming toxic.

- Add flavor with fresh herbs & spices. Instead of relying on condiments filled with refined sugars, preservatives, and other mystery ingredients to give your meals flavor, use natural, whole foods instead. Fresh herbs & spices can take any dish to the next level. Some of my go-tos are basil, rosemary, cinnamon, ginger, black pepper, sea salt, garlic, and turmeric. Dried varieties aren’t a bad option either, especially if their organic and non-gmo. For condiment lovers, you can still put out things like whole-grain mustard, tamari, and fresh salsas.

5. Do a home “pantry raid”. A pantry raid is a fun activity you can do with your kids to help them understand more about processed foods. Start by writing down the names of a few commonly found toxic ingredients found in processed foods, like high fructose corn syrup, MSG, BHT, carrageenan, canola oil, food dyes, artificial flavors, etc. Challenge your family to go through the items in your pantry to find and weed out these harmful ingredients. End the activity by talking about more healthy alternatives to the pantry items you pulled out.

6. Take a trip to the farmer’s market. There’s nowhere better to find colorful whole foods, freshly picked and full of flavor. Farmer’s markets aren’t just a fun place to get groceries, but they also can further reinforce seasonal eating and a farm-to-table mindset that makes a lasting impression. This is also a great place to meet other health-minded individuals. I know I’m inspired to eat healthier after every visit to my local farmer’s market!

7. Allow for splurges occasionally. I want to leave you with this last piece of advice because it will save you a lot unnecessary struggle. Eating healthy is a process and ultimately a personal decision that everyone must make for herself. This means that it’s important (both for you and your family) to encourage balance, not perfection. Remember to stay positive, gracious, and flexible as you inspire others along in their journey of health.
A cook’s best friend is a well-stocked kitchen, and I’m not just talking about the food. All the carefully-planned Pinterest boards in the world can’t make up for a lack of basic kitchen tools. I mean, have you tried making pancakes without a spatula? It isn’t pretty. As someone who loves to cook and cooks often, I’ve come to realize that I don’t need a million fancy gadgets to make amazing meals. Along with other areas of my life, I apply the “quality over quantity” mantra to my kitchen. This mindset saves both the dollars in my budget and the space in my cupboards.

As the primary “chef” for my family, I cook just about every day. While I don’t own any Le Creuset cookware or even a Kitchen Aid (but feel free to send these right over), I’m confident I have the necessary tools to make just about any meal of my choosing. Now, I’ll be the first to admit I like to keep things simple in the kitchen. My life is pretty busy and, while I thoroughly enjoy cooking, most nights I don’t have the time or energy to spend hours slaving over a five-course gourmet meal. And I’m guessing I’m not alone here. Even still, I do try new recipes just about every week. I love the challenge of coming up with creative dishes that are equally delicious and nutritious. I squeeze in superfoods wherever I can. I obsess over a good wine pairing. Food is my love language. But do I need all of Williams-Sonoma at my fingertips? No way.

Below, I’ve listed the top ten tools I believe every home cook should have. These are the items that I use every day, and that I guarantee will earn their place on your shelves again and again.

1. **Quality Knives**
   You’ll see knives at the top of many chefs’ must-have lists, and for good reason. A quality knife set is an investment that you won’t regret. When I swapped out my cheap college dorm kitchen knives for a quality set, I was astounded at how much easier (and faster!) it was to prep my meals. Don’t forget to keep your knives well-sharpened, too!

2. **Grater**
   While I love me some good cheeses, I most often use my grater to add punches of flavor to my meals. A grater can be used for citrus zest, ginger, turmeric, and other extremely flavorful ingredients. I rarely make a sauce, glaze, or dressing without grating something into it to make it extra delicious.

3. **Blender**
   If you’re a smoothie lover like I am, then a blender is a must. I also use my blender to make homemade soups, sauces, nut butters, & more. I absolutely adore my Vitamix & think it is worth every penny, but I also like the affordable Ninja Professional blender.

4. **Pots & Pans Set**
   This one might seem obvious to you, but there’s no way I could leave it off my list! A good pots and pans set is essential for cooking just about anything. I recommend getting a few different sizes (small, medium, large) so that you’re fully prepared for any recipe that comes your way. My preference is stainless steel, but ceramic nonstick is a great option, too.

5. **Nest of Mixing Bowls**
   Just about every recipe requires some kind of mixing, stirring, combining, etc., so you’ll definitely want some mixing bowls in your kitchen. Again, I prefer stainless steel because it’s a natural material and easy to clean.

6. **Wooden Spoons**
   Wooden spoons are my go-to for stirring anything hot on the stove. They’re inexpensive, non-toxic, and won’t scratch up your nonstick pans like metal spoons.

7. **Pepper & Salt Grinders**
Well-seasoned food is EVERYTHING. And fresh-ground salt and pepper makes ALL the difference. Do yourself a favor and grab some s&p grinders asap.

8. **Citrus Juicer/Press**
   No, I’m not talking about one of those fancy-schmancy centrifugal/masticating/high-tech machines. I just have a simple, hand-press juicer, like this one. It’s much more effective than hand-squeezing. If you don’t regularly use fresh-squeezed citrus juices in your meals, you’re seriously missing out on SO much flavor. And you can use your press to make amazing margaritas. Soooo, what are you waiting for?

9. **Cutting Boards**
   There’s no substitute for a solid, thick, wooden board. A nice one is worth the splurge because it will last forever. For fish and meats, a second plastic board is ideal because it’s easy to clean and prevents cross-contamination.

10. **Metal Spatula**
    Pancake lover or not, don’t underestimate the power of a metal spatula. I can’t remember the last time I made dinner without using mine. Again, quality counts. So don’t skimp with plastic.

Now that you know my must-haves, I also want to give a quick shout-out to a few other inexpensive kitchen tools that I love, but just don’t use every day.

**Veggie Spiralizer**
If you’ve ever spent five minutes on Pinterest looking for recipes, you’ve probably noticed a recent craze over “zoodles” or other vegetables in noodle form. I’m telling you, this is a bandwagon worth jumping on! I like using my spiralizer to make zucchini pasta, a nutritious alternative to the traditional grain-based stuff. The best part? It only takes a few minutes to make. I have a really basic spiralizer that was very inexpensive, but it’s still SO easy to use.

**Salad Spinner**
To be honest, I was skeptical about these for awhile. Years ago, I read a list of Jamie Oliver’s favorite kitchen tools and was surprised to see a salad spinner on his list. But I decided to take Jamie’s word for it, and boy was he right! To make a sensational salad, crisp and dry lettuces are essential, otherwise your salads can get soggy and the dressing won’t stick properly. Nothing dries lettuces faster or more effectively than a salad spinner.

**Crockpot**
I’m sure you know what a crockpot is, so I’ll keep this brief. If you haven’t ventured into the wonderful world of crockpot meals, today is the day. Seriously, is there anything better than coming home after a long day of work to the wonderful aroma of an ALREADY DONE delicious dinner? Nope.

Hungry yet? I know I am. I hope this list has inspired you to hop into your kitchen and start creating. What kitchen must-haves would you add?
by Danielle Reynolds-Flatt // Originally published on Puori

It’s [insert your grocery shopping day of the week here]. Your kitchen counters are covered in groceries you just picked up from the market, each item carefully chosen to help you achieve your healthy eating goals. You’re excited to prep, cook, puree, and chop. You even have your whole week planned out with recipes. But first things first. Where does all this fresh food go and how do you store it properly so that it lasts?

I get it. Food storage isn’t totally straightforward and there’s a lot more to remember than just which fruits go in the fridge or stay on your counter. To get you off on the right foot, I’ve put together this list of tips and tricks to maximize the storage life of your foods, take advantage of your limited fridge space, and simplify your health-oriented lifestyle.

1. Keep your refrigerator at 40 °F or below. This is the best way to ensure that refrigerated foods are fresh and safe to eat. Bacteria grow most rapidly between 40-140 °F, commonly referred to as the "Danger Zone" (1).

2. Store (most) fresh veggies in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. Like the rest of your fridge, this drawer should be kept at a temperature 40 °F or below. Crisper drawers are most effective when \( \frac{3}{4} \) full, and if you don’t have a crisper drawer (or run out of space in the one you do have), use a sealable plastic bag instead (2). There are some veggies that are exceptions to this rule, which I mention in this list.

3. Store fresh basil, mint, and cilantro like cut flowers, placing the stems in a cup of water. You should store other herbs loosely within perforated or partially open plastic bags for air flow. Include a paper towel to absorb any excess moisture. Bonus tip: the cup-of-water-rule also applies to asparagus and kale!


5. Store potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, and winter squashes at cooler temps, around 50-60 °F. You probably know not to put these veggies in the fridge, but it’s important to know that their storage time is cut in half at room temperature (2).

6. To prevent cross-contamination and bacterial growth, store raw foods below cooked and ready-to-eat foods in your refrigerator. The bottom shelf is also usually the coldest part of a refrigerator, so this is the perfect place to store meats.

7. Store nuts & seeds in fridge so they last longer; their healthy fats won’t oxidize and go rancid. My favorite way to store them is in glass jars. Oils should also be kept in a cool, dark place so that they don’t oxidize as well.

8. Whole grains last longer if you store them at a cool room temp (below 70°F). They will generally keep up to six months, and refined grains can last up to a year (2). Again, I recommend glass jars for storage.
9. Always marinate meat in the fridge. This one’s obvious, right?

10. Hang bananas from a hook to slow down ripening.

11. Don’t store perishable foods, (like milk,) on your fridge door, because it usually isn’t cold enough. Save the fridge door for non-perishables like condiments. This is also a great place for nuts and seeds.

12. Keep fresh eggs in the original carton rather than a special egg compartment (2). Who wants to take the time to reorganize eggs anyways?

13. On a similar note, don’t wash eggs before storing or they’ll lose their protective coating (2).

14. Don’t refrigerate tomatoes. This is one I’ve been doing incorrectly for many years. Whoops.

15. Store fruits and veggies separately. Ethylene gas produced by some fruits can cause veggies to taste bitter.

16. Store fresh fish in its original packing inside a plastic bag over a layer of ice. Thaw fish in fridge only, never at room temperature (2).

17. Avocados, pears, & mangos, & other pitted fruits should be ripened at room temperature, then refrigerated to increase storage time.

18. Wipe all moisture from fruits & veggies before refrigerating them.

19. Label all leftovers with dates. This is the easiest way to make sure you don’t lose track of the food in your fridge, something I’ve been guilty of often.

20. Buy local, seasonal produce whenever possible. It’s not only more nutrient-dense, but it will also stay fresher longer. Win-win!

These best practices will help you keep your kitchen stocked up with the nutritious and delicious foods you love. Here’s one more tool to help you plan healthy meals in the new year-- a quick guide to food refrigeration. Feel free to download it and pin to your refrigerator to reference when you need it most!

REFERENCES:
https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics


We’ve all experienced the afternoon slump. It tends to roll around sometime after lunch, leaving you sluggish and often unproductive. Stress, lack of sleep, and your blood sugar balance (or lack thereof) all contribute to this feeling of fatigue. Thankfully, there are several simple ways you can avoid this crash altogether.

You might be thinking that coffee is the most obvious anecdote. As a coffee lover myself, I’ve certainly turned to coffee for a quick energy boost more than a time or two. The problem with coffee, however, is that it can actually contribute to your daily fatigue fest because it’s not blood-sugar balancing. Coffee also contributes to poor sleep, causes food cravings, and can be addictive. Some of you might be more inclined to reach for a Coke instead, but the same rules apply: the high sugar content spikes your blood sugar causing you to crash later and feel worse than you did in the first place. Bottom line? You’ve got better options.

Like I hinted at before, the trick to fighting afternoon fatigue comes down to your blood sugar balance. This means it’s crucial to have snacks nearby that consist of a protein, fat, and complex carb. Don’t worry, this is simpler that it sounds. To get you started, I’ve listed five delicious snacks that are not only blood sugar balancing, but that also require little-to-no prep (score!).

1. Fresh veggies and hummus. This snack is super easy to grab on-the-go. If you’re not a hummus fan, try a black bean dip instead!

2. Trail mix with raw nuts and seeds. Supercharge your trail mix with goodies like pumpkin seeds, raw almonds, coconut flakes, and cacao nibs. So many possibilities!

3. Apple slices with almond butter. Don’t be afraid to slather on the almond butter generously. Bonus points for adding a sprinkle of cinnamon which is extremely blood-sugar balancing.

4. Avocado toast. My personal favorite, topped with a pinch of sea salt & pepper. Even better if you opt for a wholesome sprouted-grain bread.

5. Smoothie. This one HAD to be one the list! For a well-balanced smoothie, combine your favorite fruits or veggies, a protein (chia seeds, almond butter, protein powder, etc.), and a high-quality fat (coconut oil, avocado, etc.).

In addition to having healthy snacks nearby, there are other easy ways you can fight afternoon fatigue & feel your best all day long. I’ve listed my top three energy-boosting tips below.

1. Eat a nourishing lunch. Just like with snacks, your lunch should include a complex carb, lean protein, and quality fat. Some good sources of protein include superfoods like hemp hearts, chia seeds, and black beans. For a high quality fat, use ingredients like coconut oil, olive oil, or avocados, to name a few. Just be sure to mix up what you eat every day. Variety isn’t just more fun, it’s also essential for a healthy body!

2. Drink (lots of) water. I really can’t stress the importance of drinking water enough. Dehydration leads to lower energy levels, and about a billion other nasty side effects. Drinking water also detoxifies your body and speeds up your metabolism. Thirsty yet?

3. Go on a quick power walk. Because sunlight stimulates your brain, a little walk after lunch can help you stay focused and energized. Walking also prevents melatonin (sleep hormone) from being released, plus it reduces stress. That’s a win-win-win, if
In this fast-paced world, finding enough energy to make it through your day might sometimes feel impossible. I am confident that you CAN eliminate your afternoon crash, and I hope that these tips help you fight fatigue like a champ!

by Danielle Reynolds-Flatt // Originally published on Puori

Did you know that turmeric is a superfood with healing medicinal properties? It’s actually an herb in the ginger family, most commonly recognized as the yellow coloring agent in curries and mustards. Because of the large body of solid research (I’m talking thousands of studies!) that confirm the benefits of turmeric’s powerful phytonutrients, I’ve recently started to incorporate turmeric more into my diet. And if you’re not a curry or mustard fan don’t despair-- there are many other ways you can use it in dishes you already know and love. We’ll get to some recipes in a minute, but first read about its benefits, below.

1. Anti-inflammatory: This is what it’s known for best. Turmeric’s anti-inflammatory properties come from curcumin, which works by inhibiting the release of enzymes that produce an inflammatory response. This means that turmeric can function as a natural pain reliever, and studies show that it can be as effective as over-the-counter drugs, like Motrin and Ibuprofen (Maroon, 2010). Bonus: Because of the anti-inflammatory properties, you can also use turmeric topically to reduce canker sores and cold sores. Just mix with water to form a paste, then apply (Wood, 2010).

2. Brain health: Numerous studies have identified the curcumin in turmeric as a natural anti-depressant, making it a safe way to treat major depressive disorder (Sanmukhani, 2014). Of course, consult your doctor before deciding that this is a suitable
3. Cancer prevention: in case you weren’t convinced that curcumin is turmeric’s secret weapon, let me tell you about its antioxidant properties. Curcumin, along with the water and fat-soluble extracts found in turmeric exhibit strong antioxidant activity, comparable to Vitamin C and Vitamin E (Labban, 2014). These antioxidant properties are important because they are the agents that protect your cells from damage and prevent them from becoming cancerous. Healthy cells = a healthy you!

4. Digestive health: Like other anti-inflammatory foods, turmeric has many positive effects on the digestive system. Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Crohn’s Disease, and ulcerative colitis are a few examples of the gastrointestinal disorders that have been effectively treated with turmeric (Labban, 2014).

5. Detox: Turmeric has hepatoprotective characteristics, which basically means it’s extremely liver-loving (Labban, 2014). Since the liver is the most important organ in the body involved in detoxification, turmeric is a major contributor to healthy detox. Specifically, curcumin stimulates the phase II liver detox pathway and therefore inhibits carcinogens from harming our bodies (Percival, 1997).

Ready to get your hands on some turmeric? Most people don’t know you can buy it at the grocery store in its natural form— a small root similar in appearance to fresh ginger. So skip the powdered stuff whenever possible to maximize its amazing benefits. I’ve found that turmeric is especially pleasing in warm foods, like soups, and almost always pairs well in dishes that call for ginger. My favorite way to use turmeric is in this turmeric ginger latte, which you can make iced or hot. I also like to grate it over soups, salads, and stir-frys as an edible garnish, toss it in a smoothie, or sprinkle it over popcorn. Check out the recipes below for a few simple ways you can start adding turmeric to your own meals.

1. Turmeric Ginger Latte
2. Roasted Carrots w/Turmeric
3. Turmeric Roasted Cauliflower
4. Turmeric Sea Salt Popcorn

REFERENCES:


Smoothies get a lot of love from the health and wellness community, and for good reason. They offer an easy way to create a nutrient-packed meal that only takes a few minutes to whip up. Below, I’ve shared my tried-and-tested tips for how to build a healthy smoothie. The best part? There are hundreds of delicious ways you can do it!

**INGREDIENTS TO AVOID**

Let’s start off by running through a few ingredients to avoid. As you might have guessed, refined sugar is at the top of this list. And since there are SO many ways to sweeten a smoothie naturally (fruit, honey, maple syrup—oh my!), there is no need to despair.

It’s also a good rule of thumb to avoid common food allergens, like soy, dairy, and gluten. Many people are sensitive to these kinds of foods and have trouble digesting them, so I suggest limiting them whenever possible. It’s worth noting that processed, unfermented soy products, like soy milk, contain dangerously high levels of estrogen which have been linked to infertility, growth defects, and more. I opt for almond, coconut, or hemp milks instead.

**HEALTHY SMOOTHIE INGREDIENTS**

Now that we have the bad stuff out of the way, let’s focus on all the wonderful foods you can use to make yourself a delicious (and nutritious!) smoothie. The foundation for a healthy smoothie is to make sure it consists of:

1. Complex carbs: whole fruits, green vegetables, etc.
2. Lean protein: chia seeds, hemp hearts, protein powder, etc.
3. Quality fats: avocado, coconut oil, nut butters, etc.

This nutrition trifecta is essential to building a smoothie that will satisfy your body and leave you feeling your best. By the way, if you’re wondering about how to choose a quality protein powder, I’ve got a great one right here. I love this one because it’s plant-based and non-gmo, with no added sugar or artificial additives. Plus, it’s dairy-free, soy-free, AND gluten-free! A winner in my book for sure.

**GETTING THE RIGHT CONSISTENCY**

A smoothie really isn’t a smoothie until it’s, well, smooth. To get that perfect creamy texture, I like to use whole foods that are full of nutrients my body will love. My go-to’s are:

- Bananas - also serve as a natural sweetener
- Avocados - my favorite superfood in all the land
- Almond butter - full of protein and fat (the good kind!)
- Kefir - a fermented dairy product I don’t avoid! Look for unsweetened varieties.

It’s also equally important that your smoothie isn’t too thick to drink. My favorite liquid bases for smoothies include delicious dairy-free options like almond milk, coconut milk, and coconut water, which you can find at any grocery store these days. Good ole plain tap water works just fine, too.

TOP IT OFF, SUPERFOOD-STYLE!

All that’s left to do now is to top off your smoothie with something special. These superfoods will not only make your creation Instagram-worthy, but will also add one last incredibly nutritious touch:

- Cacao nibs - full of antioxidants, flavonoids, and magnesium. Plus, um, CHOCOLATE.
- Goji berries - tons of vitamin C and fiber.
- Chia seeds - loaded with omega 3 fatty acids and other amazing micronutrients.
- Coconut flakes - protein, fiber, iron, & zinc never tasted so good!
- Cinnamon - an ancient marvel that balances your blood sugar and decreases inflammation.

As you can imagine, there are endless possible combinations of ingredients to create a healthy smoothie. To get started, you can download this [free cookbook](#) full of easy-to-make smoothie recipes. My favorite flavor combos are:

- Chocolate Cherry
- Raspberry Avocado
- Strawberry Coconut
- Banana Cinnamon
- Almond Vanilla

Remember, one of the best things about a smoothie is that it is SO easy to customize just the way you like it. My advice is to use foods and flavors you already know you love as a starting point for your own creative concoctions. What’s your favorite kind of smoothie?