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# Family Matters

*Improving Health Together*

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Newsletter

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## Creating a Healthy Food Environment at Home

*By Deeona Johnston, Family and Consumer Science Agent, Phillips County*



Every year many people create the goal to improve their health. They have many reasons why they make this goal. Maybe they want to set a good example for their children, or they've been told by their doctor they need to make changes for their health.

Wanting to make changes is a great first step but changing your food environment can help you stick to your goal to become healthier.

There have been many research studies that focus on the foods offered at home and how it impacts the intake of fruits and vegetables. When children have easy access to fruits and vegetables, they frequently eat more fruits and vegetables and are more likely to be at a healthy weight. Children are also influenced by the food their parents eat and how they react to new foods. If a child sees their parent making a disapproving face while eating a food, they are less likely to try the food.

### How to increase fruit and vegetable intake by creating a healthy food environment:

- **Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are great alternatives to fresh.** Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are canned or frozen when they are ripe and at their best flavor. The texture may be different because of the canning or freezing methods.
- **Use fruit as a dessert.** Check out the recipe below!
- **Keep fresh fruits and vegetables where you can see them.** On the counter or put them in front area in the refrigerator. If you are looking for a snack, you're more likely to grab something that you can see.
- **Put high-energy foods (cookies, chips, candy, etc.) in cabinets.** This can stop you and your family from grabbing them during the day and snacking.
- **Get your kids involved.** Involve them by letting them pick a new fruit or vegetable to try that week.
- **Eat vegetables as a snack.** Pair them with a ranch dressing or cheese sauce to add more flavor.



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- **Make a large amount of the item at one time.** Example: Peel several oranges at one time. Don't forget to store it in the refrigerator.
- **Only store snacks in the kitchen.** Keep the bag of chips in the kitchen. This will keep you from pointless snacking by making you travel to the chips if you want more.
- **Use smaller plates during meals.** The smaller plates look more full and helps reduce the size of the portions you take. If you are still hungry wait 10-20 minutes before going back for seconds.

## Let's Talk



Creating a food environment to improve your health is as easy as keeping healthy foods in sight and high-energy foods in cabinets. If your family carelessly snacks while watching T.V. or gaming, a great way to reduce the amount of the snack is to keep the bag or package in the kitchen. Place a couple servings on a plate, if they want more, they can come to the kitchen to get more. This gives you and your family a chance to move and keeps you from overeating.

## Recipes for Health

### Frozen Yogurt Bark (make with frozen or fresh fruit)

#### Items Needed:

- Parchment or wax paper (you can also use tin foil)
- Large baking sheet with a rim

#### Ingredients:

- 16-20oz Plain or Vanilla Yogurt
- ¼ cup granola or your favorite chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts, or almonds)
- 2 cups of fruit pieces, sliced or diced. Change it up every time for new flavors!
  - Fresh: 4 sliced strawberries, a handful of each raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries, and 1 peeled and sliced or diced kiwi
  - Frozen: 2 cups out of a bag of chopped mixed fruit
- Optional: 2 Tbsp of honey (great to add if you use plain Greek yogurt or if you like your yogurt sweeter)



#### Instructions:

1. Wash hands and food contact surfaces with soap and water.
2. Line the baking sheet with the parchment paper.
3. Optional: Mix the yogurt and honey.
4. Pour the yogurt onto the baking sheet and spread it even.
5. Sprinkle the fruit and granola/nuts on top of the yogurt.
6. Place the baking sheet flat in the freezer for 3-4 hours until it is frozen solid.
7. Once it is frozen, break the yogurt into pieces. Enjoy!

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