



Choosing Foods for Me

Fourth-grade nutrition education newsletter

Lesson **3**



Breaking down food

How are nutrients absorbed into the body? Digestion starts in the mouth when teeth bite off and chew food. Food becomes soft and easy to swallow. Then the esophagus takes food from the throat and pushes it down into the stomach. Next the food moves into the small intestine, where most of the nutrients are absorbed. Then the food travels to the large intestine where water and minerals are absorbed.

Remind family members to ...

- **Chew well and slowly.** The slower you eat, the more satisfying your meal will be and the less likely you are to eat too much.
- **Wash hands** before touching food, after using the toilet and after touching pets.
- **Choose foods with fiber** such as fruits, veggies and whole grains. Fiber helps us feel full. It also helps keep your digestive system healthy.
- **Drink water.** Water helps your digestive system and is a healthier alternative to sweet drinks.

These high-fiber foods are good for digestion and health

- Fruits and veggies, especially the skins
- Whole grains such as 100% whole wheat bread or brown rice
- Beans and peas
- Nuts and seeds

Children love to be involved in planning meals and snacks. Talk about these foods, and ask your child which high-fiber foods (see suggestion list) could be added to them.

Turkey sandwich

I would add _____
to the sandwich.

Tomato and greens salad

I would add _____
to the salad.

Carrots with hummus for a dip

I would add _____
with the carrots for dipping.

Low-fat yogurt

I would add _____
to the yogurt.

Pizza

I would add _____
to the pizza.

Soup

I would add _____
to the soup.

Mac and cheese

I would add _____
to the mac and cheese.

Spaghetti and meatballs

I would have _____
with the spaghetti and meatballs.



Give macaroni and cheese a fiber boost by adding cut-up vegetables.

Some suggestions:

- **Turkey sandwich:** Add slices of tomato or have fruit as a side.
- **Tomato and greens salad:** Add canned kidney beans or chickpeas.
- **Carrots with hummus for a dip:** Add whole-wheat crackers for dipping.
- **Low-fat yogurt:** Add sliced fruit, such as strawberries.
- **Pizza:** Add fruit or veggie pieces.
- **Soup:** Add veggie pieces, beans, peas or all of these!
- **Mac and cheese:** Add small veggie pieces, such as green or red pepper.
- **Spaghetti and meatballs:** Add fruit for dessert.

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For more information, call MU Extension's Show Me Nutrition Line at 1-888-515-0016.

Need help stretching your food dollars? Contact your local resource center or go online to mydss.mo.gov/food-assistance