

Eating for You Badge

Purpose: Learn how to eat your way to a healthy mood, mind, and body.

Resources: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov) or [health.gov](https://www.health.gov)

Step 1. Learn how good nutrition helps your body

Your body is a complex, amazing machine. Are you giving it the right kind of fuel? Set habits now that will keep your body at its peak performance all your life. First, take a look at the good and great, the bad and really bad in your current eating. Try a “no junk food” challenge. This means to try to cut out eating anything that you deem “unhealthy.” (This might vary from person to person, and that’s okay!)

Step 2. Find out how what you eat affects your skin

Lean protein, complex carbohydrates, whole grains, fruits, and veggies make your skin, hair, and nails look better. People used to think chocolate and greasy food caused acne, but research indicates they have little effect on pimple production. However, drinking water is beneficial for skin health. Find out the best amount of water for your age and activity level, then come up with three clever ways to get enough water every day.

Step 3. Explore how your diet affects your stress level

Caffeine and sugar affect mood swings, fatigue, and concentration. When your levels of cortisol (also known as the stress hormone) go up, so do your cravings for fat, sugar, and salt. Research food additives and chemicals that are believed to contribute to anxiety and stress. See how many you can find in the foods you and your family eat. Talk to your family about why limiting these foods or finding substitutes for them can be important to your family’s health.

Step 4: Investigate how what you eat affects your sleep

Research says that teens and tweens need more sleep than adults do and are more affected by lack of sleep than adults are. Have you ever noticed how what you consume can affect your sleep? Start a log of things that you have right before bed and what time you ate or drank them. When you wake up in the morning, record how well you think you slept. Do you notice any patterns? Try incorporating new routines before you go to sleep.

Step 5: Look at how your diet affects your energy

Keeping energy up is all about keeping blood sugar steady—not up or down. For some people, eating whole foods and enough fiber and protein at each meal does the trick. For others, eating five or six small meals throughout the day works best. Take a poll of friends and family. Ask them five questions about when they feel most energetic and how it seems to relate to what and when they’ve eaten. Now ask yourself the same questions. What conclusions or advice can you draw?

Congratulations! You’ve earned the Eating for Beauty badge!

Girl Scout Cadettes

