



2026

Time for Kids: Recipe
for Health Calendar

NEWS 3 NOW

TIME FOR
KIDS®

SSM Health

New year, healthier you!

A new year brings the hope for new beginnings. Take time to focus on health as a family, setting you up for a healthy, happy 2026.

Set goals together.

You don't need resolutions to make meaningful change in your life. Talk as a family about what you want to accomplish this year, then set SMART goals together. Be **Specific**; know how you'll **Measure** success; keep your goals **Achievable**; ask if the goal serves a **Relevant** purpose in your life; and set a **Timeframe** for when you want to accomplish the goal.

Healthy meals fuel happy families.

The foods we eat turn into the fuel our body needs to function well. Get together to plan meals and snacks as a family – focusing on a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Work toward eating as a family – away from screens – at least once per week to connect over a delicious, healthy meal.

Set an alarm for success at school.

Without good sleep, students struggle at school. Start the year off right by setting a healthy sleep routine that includes a consistent bedtime and wake-up time (yes, even on the weekends).

Ward off winter blues with movement.

It might be cold and dreary outside, but growing bodies need plenty of exercise to stay healthy. Look for ways to move as a family like after dinner dance parties or Sunday afternoon walks at the park.

Find fun ways to boost your mood.

We all feel the effects of winter weather – feeling cooped up and cranky. Try creating a family “mood jar” with written reminders of things that help boost everyone’s mood. Examples include playing a game, talking about favorite memories, or even watching your family’s favorite movie together.



January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Notes: _____



Love your heart for a lifetime.

Families and friends often exchange valentines and heart-shaped candies every Valentine's Day. This month, take time to highlight the importance of taking care of your family's heart health for life.

Walk, run, play for a strong heart.

Health experts recommend 60 minutes of exercise every day. Focus on fun ways to get active every day:

- Dance to your favorite songs.
- Run in place during commercial breaks of your favorite show (or between episodes).
- Bundle up for a family ice skating trip – or even a walk around the block.
- Help clean around the house. (Bonus points for this activity!)

Just say no to cigarettes, tobacco and vaping.

Smoking, vaping and using other tobacco products weakens your heart and can damage your body's circulatory system. You can protect your heart – and your health – by never starting to use tobacco products. If someone in your family uses tobacco, encourage them to stop.

Need help quitting? Call the Wisconsin Quitline at 800-QUIT-NOW or text READY to 34191. To Live Vape Free, text VAPEFREE to 873373.

Laugh a little.

Research shows that laughter really is great medicine. A good chuckle and a big belly laugh help lower stress hormones and artery inflammation while increasing "good" cholesterol levels and boosting our overall mood. Share a little laughter with a good family joke telling session or watch a funny movie together.

Eat a heart healthy diet.

Eating a balanced diet focused on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins helps build strong muscles – including your heart! Work on limiting high fat and high sodium foods as a family – high fat foods contribute to high cholesterol, while eating foods high in sodium can increase your blood pressure.

Boost your heart-health with these heart-focused meal planning ideas:

- Try planning a week where every meal includes at least one raw or cooked fruit or vegetable.
- Plan a day when all the grains you eat are whole grains.
- Lean into plant power – include one "meatless" meal in your weekly dinner plan.
- Swap sodium for flavor by using herbs, spices, garlic, and citrus juices like lemon or lime to season food instead of salt and rinse canned veggies and beans to reduce excess sodium.



February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Notes: _____



Dreaming up healthy habits.

No one is at their best when they're sleep deprived. Beyond impacting mood and reaction times, research shows that kids who don't get enough sleep also have a harder time concentrating in school and their immune systems have a tougher time fighting off illness.

Spring forward with success.

Daylight Saving Time starts on March 8 – meaning our clocks “spring forward” by one hour. Ease everyone into the earlier wake-up times by moving bedtime routines up by about 10 minutes each night the week before the time change.

Consistency is key.

Like other habits, being consistent is key to getting a good night's sleep. Help kids build nighttime rituals and habits to help their bodies slowly wind down and get ready for a full night of quality, restful sleep.

Turn out the lights (and turn off the screens).

Light and noise from TVs, smartphones, and tablets can keep your brain on high alert, making it harder to get good sleep. Start turning off all digital devices and turning down lights about an hour before bed to help wind down.

Keep it cool.

Research shows most people sleep better when their bedroom is cooler – between 65 to 72 degrees. Try turning down the heat ahead of bedtime to promote better sleep for the whole family.

Know your sleep needs.

While sleep needs can vary from person to person, knowing how much sleep your kids need based on their age can help you set appropriate bedtimes so they wake up refreshed every morning. Here are some doctor-recommended sleep times for kids:

1 to 3 months	14 - 17 hours per day
4 to 11 months	12 - 15 hours per day
1 to 2 years	11 - 14 hours per day
3 to 5 years	10 - 13 hours per day
6 to 13 years	9 - 11 hours per day
14 to 17 years	8 - 10 hours per day



March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Notes: _____



Healthy planet, healthy people.

From the air we breathe and the water we drink to access to safe places to play, the world around us impacts our health in many ways. By keeping the Earth healthy, we can help keep our families healthy, too.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Practicing the “three R’s” helps conserve natural resources, saves energy, and helps minimize pollution. Try to recycle cans, bottles, paper, plastic, etc. at home. Think about ways to reuse older items instead of throwing them away – reuse plastic shopping bags and donate outgrown clothes or toys. Reduce your household waste by focusing on buying and using only what you need.

Focus on fresh.

Another way to help save natural resources is to eat more sustainably. This could mean eating produce and food products that are grown and made locally. Another option: try planting a container garden for commonly used vegetables and herbs. Have fun with it! Once your vegetables and herbs are ready to harvest, pick a new recipe together to use what you’ve grown.

Make every day Earth Day.

Earth Day is April 22, but you can make EVERY day Earth Day! Look for ways to improve the world around you as part of your family’s daily routines. When you see litter on the ground, pick it up to throw it away. Designate a bin or bag for recyclables at home. Make plans as a family to donate outgrown or unused items to local organizations who can use them – like churches, shelters, and even your school.

Find alternative travel for short trips.

If you have errands or want to make a trip that’s not far, consider walking, biking, or taking the bus to your destination. Not only will it give you extra exercise, it will cut down on the gas you use and the emissions that contribute to air pollution.



April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

Notes: _____



Creating healthy connections.

Technology and kids' access to the digital world is changing – fast. Talk about how everyone in the family uses the digital world and find a family balance to keep everyone engaged, happy, and connected IRL.

Get offline.

While it is possible to do almost everything online these days, it's not healthy to spend most of our time glued to a screen or engaging only in the virtual world. Set time limits on device use at home and help each other – kids and parents – find a healthy balance between time online and offline.

Talk it out.

We all want our kids to come to us with their questions, concerns, and successes. When you talk openly about issues online with AI, video games, and social media, your kids are more likely to know they can trust you in awkward, scary, or even dangerous situations – both online and in real life.

Don't demand or ban.

It might seem like the best way to avoid issues with the digital world is to ban access to social media, online gaming, and other sites. Unfortunately, access to the digital world is available almost everywhere your kids go – so talk as a family about what works for everyone, what's off-limits, and explain the why behind your family's rules.

It's not all bad.

Yes, there are very real dangers to too much time online. But as kids grow up alongside advancing technologies, they are also using social media and Artificial Intelligence as part of their social and emotional development. Plus, they may be learning how to do cool things like developing apps and games. Learn about what they're doing – ask about their time spent online and consider playing games or learning an online skill with them.

Stay safe while engaging online.

Parents aren't on their own when it comes to protecting kids online. Make sure you understand – and routinely review – safety and privacy settings on every device, app, and social network your kids use.



May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	NEWS 3 NOW	TIME FOR KIDS	SSM Health	

Safety first for summer fun.

Don't let injuries interrupt your summer fun! Put safety first to ensure nothing but good times once the school year ends.

Slather on sun protection.

Dermatologists agree - if you're having fun in the sun, you need sunscreen. Use broad-spectrum products with at least 30 SPF. Remember to reapply if you're outside for longer than an hour - and consider setting a timer on your phone if you think you'll forget.

Don't forget the shades.

UV rays can damage more than just our skin - they can cause serious eye conditions like photokeratitis. An SSM Health optometrist says it's like sunburn for your eyes. Protect everyone's vision with sunglasses with 100% UV protection, shade breaks, and wide-brimmed hats.

Protect your noggin.

If they're having fun on wheels - make sure kids are wearing a helmet! Wearing a helmet can reduce risk of brain injury by 80 to 90%.

Make a splash, safely.

Summer fun usually includes diving in at the local pool or swimming at area beaches. Talk with kids about water safety. Remind them to never swim alone, because accidents can happen - even to the strongest swimmers.



June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

Notes: _____



Harvest health with fresh fruits and vegetables.

We all know eating fruits and vegetables is important to get the vitamins and minerals we need to be healthy. Summer is a great time to try new fruits and vegetables while they're in season.

Celebrate the season.

Fresh, locally grown produce is usually easy to find, tastes great, and is less expensive because it doesn't need to be shipped long distances. Build your weekly grocery list with in-season items – then head to the local farm stand, farmers market, or corner grocery store to pick up your favorite items.

Variety is the spice of life.

Different fruits and vegetables offer us a variety of the vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients like fiber that our bodies need. Try to "eat the rainbow" throughout the week to get the biggest nutritional bang for your grocery buck.

Picky palettes.

Got a picky eater? That's okay – we all have foods we like and don't like. Doctors recommend you keep offering a variety of fruits and vegetables for kids to try over time. If you're stuck – try offering a new dip or cooking your vegetables in a new way. Sometimes a small change is enough to get your kids interested in tasting something they thought they didn't like.

Affordable and convenient options.

While local, in-season produce often comes with a smaller price tag, sometimes fresh fruits and veggies are still expensive. You don't have to skimp on or skip them altogether to save. Frozen, canned and dried options still contain those important vitamins and minerals – at a lower price.



July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

Notes: _____



School year success.

A new school year is about to start. Amid the excitement and anticipation, it's important to prepare everyone for a healthy, successful return to the classroom.

Prevent illness before it starts.

Vaccines are a safe and effective way to prevent many types of illness including polio, measles, chicken pox, and more. Check in with your primary care provider to make sure your kids are up to date on any required vaccinations.

See the board - clearly.

Being able to see – and read – what's on the whiteboard is a critical part of learning. An annual eye exam can help spot potential vision problems early. Make sure to schedule exams ahead of the first day of school so you know your kid can see the whiteboard – and any listed assignments – clearly.

Catch up on your zzz's.

Summer schedules usually include later bedtimes and more relaxed mornings. If that's true at your house, ease into the school year routine by adjusting bedtimes by about 10 minutes each day for a week or two before school starts.

Full bellies, focused minds.

Help your kids focus all day long with a healthy diet. Prioritize starting each morning with breakfast; pack nutritious lunches that include fiber rich fruits and vegetables, plus whole grains and lean protein; and don't forget easy access to healthy after-school snacks like apple slices and nut butter.

Ease back-to-school anxieties.

Starting the school year isn't always exciting. Sometimes the unknowns that come with new teachers, new school buildings and new classmates can make kids feel anxious. Talk through fears together to validate their feelings, while reminding them of their past success with new situations.



August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	 			

Keep 'em in class.

Students are back in school, which means homework isn't the only thing coming home with your kids. These doctor – and parent – approved tips will help you ward off the school year sick season.

Keep it all clean.

Routinely used items like backpacks, lunchboxes, water bottles, and ear buds need to be cleaned – often. Make it a priority to clean and sanitize items frequently. Water bottles should be wiped with a disinfecting cloth or put through the dishwasher daily.

Wash your hands.

Make sure everyone in the family is washing their hands before and after eating, after using the restroom, and after sneezing, coughing, and blowing noses. Warm water and soap are best; but hand sanitizer works, too.

When sharing isn't caring.

Remind kids to avoid sharing drinks, ear buds, and other items that can pass germs from one person to another.

An apple a day...

... can help keep the doctor away, sort of. By eating a balanced diet filled with a variety of fruits and vegetables you can boost your immune system, which fights off illness. Try to "eat the rainbow" – different colored produce provides many of the vitamins and other nutrients needed for a strong, healthy immune system.



September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
30	31					5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

Notes: _____



Be a buddy, not a bully.

Bullying happens every day. Studies show that kids who are bullied are at a higher risk for depression, anxiety, physical complaints, and decreased academic performance.

Online playground.

Parents and grandparents usually think of bullying as happening on the playground or in school hallways. While those situations still happen, in our chronically online world, bullying behaviors are following our kids everywhere they go. Keep connected with your kids to understand how they are feeling and if they are experiencing cyberbullying.

Reporting bullies.

In most cases, bullying happens when adults aren't watching. Knowing that parents and teachers can't see everything, encourage your kids to tell a trusted adult when they are bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.

Raising buddies.

Surveys show that at least one in seven students in grades K-12 is either a bully or a victim of a bully. Teach your kids the importance of being a buddy. Encourage them to stand up for themselves and others if they see bullying online or in real life.

Kindness is key.

When in doubt, kindness is always the answer. Teach your kids how to be kind to others in big and small ways – both online and in person. Show them what kindness looks like in your daily actions by holding the door open for others, offering sincere compliments to people and sharing words of support when you know someone is struggling.



October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
27	28	29	30			3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Notes: _____



Giving thanks for health's sake.

Showing your gratitude for someone does more than just feel good – it can improve our health! This month, try showing gratitude to others in your everyday life for a healthy boost.

Gratitude is good for you.

Yes, practicing gratitude feels good – but did you know it's good for you? Research shows that practicing gratitude can improve sleep, mood, and immunity. It also decreases depression, anxiety, and chronic pain.

Find a new perspective.

Sometimes we all have trouble finding something good to focus on. Experts believe our brains will focus on negative information to help us avoid painful or uncomfortable situations in the future. That's called negativity bias. You can break out of this cycle by intentionally shifting your focus and practicing gratitude.

Practice makes progress.

To gain the benefits of being grateful, you can develop a gratitude practice. Some people do this by slowing down and being present in little moments. Others use a gratitude journal to write down people, events, and moments that made them feel happy each day. Try it! Dedicate a few minutes in the morning or right before bed to thinking about someone or something that made you feel happy that day.

Show your thanks for others.

If you're grateful to someone in your life, tell them! Give them a call, send a text, or write them a short note letting them know what they mean to you. This is a great way to experience – and share – the health benefits of gratitude.

Give yourself a little gratitude, too.

It can be hard to focus on ourselves sometimes, particularly during a season of giving. But think about all the amazing things your body does every day: every year you take about eight million breaths, your feet take you where you need to go, and your arms allow you to hold someone you love. Take time to show yourself a little extra love with your favorite snack, activity, or form of self-care.



November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

Notes: _____



Cheers to a happy – and healthy – holiday season.

Parties and dinners and gift exchanges galore – the holiday season is packed with extra events on everyone's schedule. Don't let the busyness of the season impact your health.

Yes, you can say no.

The holiday season comes filled with lots of fun, excitement ... and expectations. While it's tempting to say yes to every invitation, that can also add unnecessary stress to an already full schedule. Be intentional about your plans this season – and schedule time in the new year to connect if you need to decline a holiday party, dinner, or other celebration.

Say so long to stress.

Between school events, work parties, personal commitments, holiday shopping, and your regular to-do list – the holidays can ramp up stress levels FAST! Be intentional about making time to de-stress daily. Prioritize moving your body or practicing breathing exercises or other forms of meditation to keep your stress levels – and blood pressure – from rising too high.

Don't skimp on sleep.

Skimping on sleep does more than dampen our mood, it can weaken our immune system making it easier to get sick. Give yourself the gift of rest! Stick to your normal sleep schedule as much as possible.

Indulge in moderation.

Cookies and cocktails, pies and more – celebrating the holidays often also means indulging in some of your favorite treats. Try to find balance. Don't deny yourself the joy of seasonal favorites, but indulge wisely. Try eating a healthy snack before big parties and drink plenty of water before, during, and after celebrations.



December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2

Notes: _____



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