

# Family Time



**Help Your Kids Make Healthy Food Choices - from the Protein Group!** Your children are establishing eating habits that will last a lifetime and you have the greatest influence on your children's food habits. Protein Group foods are the main source of the essential nutrient protein - needed for growth of muscles, bones, cartilage, skin, and blood. They are also the building blocks for enzymes, hormones, and vitamins.

## Things You Can Do

- 1 Vary your proteins.**  
The Protein Group includes both plant and animal sources. Change up the kind of protein you serve to create variety in your family meals.
- 2 Go lean or low-fat.**  
Proteins are essential for good health, but some protein foods can be high in saturated fat and cholesterol, so trim and drain fat from meats and look for at least 90% lean on the package.
- 3 Think portion control.**  
Three ounces is the serving size for most meats, so get the flavor you crave but in a smaller portion.
- 4 Eat plant proteins more often.**  
All kinds of beans, peas, and soy are part of the Protein Group. Look for ways to include kidney, pinto, black, red, and white beans, split peas, chick peas, soy and soy products in your meals.
- 5 Don't forget nuts and seeds.**  
Nuts and seeds are a great flavor and protein addition to salads and main dishes as well as snacks. They are also a concentrated source of calories, so keep portion in mind.

**Creating  
Healthy  
Habits  
Together**



*Developed by the University of California Cooperative Extension.*