

# Food for Thought

January 2026

## Start the Year Strong: Simple Ways to Move More

Moving your body is one of the best ways to improve your health. Physical activity will improve your sleep quality, improve your mood, and reduce blood pressure.

### How much exercise do I need?

For adults, moderate-intensity activity for as little as 30 minutes five times per week is all you need to improve your health. You don't have to join a gym or have fancy equipment to start down a path to better health.

### How much exercise should my kids get?

Children need 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week. Kids who are physically active tend to sleep better, do better in school, get sick less often, and have stronger bones and muscles. Getting your kids involved in your physical activity is a great way to spend time together. Plus, being physically active early in life leads to a greater chance of it becoming a life-long habit.

### Where should I start?

Walking for 30 minutes is beneficial. Any activity that increases your heart rate will count toward this goal.

### Some ways to get active in the new year include:

- **Stand instead of sitting:** Complete tasks while standing.
- **Take a walk:** Walk your kids to school or walk while you are at one of their activities, walk during a break at work, or take a walk after dinner. Walking as a family could be a good way to spend time together. Get 30 minutes all at once or broken into 2 to 3 shorter sessions.
- **Outdoor activities:** Enjoy hiking, exploring area parks, and playing in the snow.
- **5-minute movement breaks:** Schedule bursts of energy breaks throughout the day.
- **Family activities:** Plan a family physical activity calendar. There are many ideas for daily physical activity calendars that can be found online with a simple search.
- **Obstacle courses:** Create obstacle courses with household items for fun and exercise.
- **Dance time:** Host a family dance party. Dance around the house or use a video dance game to stay active.



## Hummus Pita Pizza

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 4 each whole wheat pita bread           | 1 cup hummus (choice of flavor) |
| 20 each cherry or grape tomatoes halved | 12 black olives sliced          |
| 1 cup feta cheese crumbled              |                                 |

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Wash tomatoes. Cut them in halves. Slice black olives.
3. Spread the hummus over the pita.
4. Sprinkle with feta cheese, tomato halves, and olive slices.
5. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes.



Add other favorite veggies such as red onions and spinach for an extra nutrition boost.

## Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Banana Cookies

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 bananas (very ripe) | 1 cup oats (quick or old-fashioned) |
| ½ teaspoon cinnamon   | ½ teaspoon vanilla                  |
| ½ cup chocolate chips |                                     |

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a medium bowl, mash the bananas with a fork until mostly smooth.
3. Add oats, cinnamon, vanilla, and chocolate chips. Mix well.
4. Drop spoonfuls of dough onto a lightly sprayed or oiled baking sheet. Flatten with the back of a spoon or bottom of a drinking glass.
5. Bake 10–15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool before serving.



The texture of these cookies is best right after baking.  
Instead of chocolate chips, try dried cranberries or chopped nuts.

**Eat Smart Idaho offers FREE classes & educational events that can help limited resource individuals & families learn how to eat well for less! Ask for Eat Smart Idaho in your County.**

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai &  
Shoshone Counties 208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, &  
Nez Perce Counties 208-883-2267



To contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator: Kali Gardiner, RDN, LD  
Phone: 208-292-2525  
E-mail – [kalig@uidaho.edu](mailto:kalig@uidaho.edu)  
Web: [www.eatsmartidaho.org](http://www.eatsmartidaho.org)

Sources: The University of Maryland; The Ohio State University; <https://extension.okstate.edu/announcements/family-and-consumer-sciences-newsletters/january-fcs-newsletter-2023.html>; <https://extension.msstate.edu/publications/healthy-snacks-for-kids-the-go-or-home> retrieved 01/04/26

This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.