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### Healthy Eating During Busy Seasons of Life

It is easy to feel stressed around mealtime especially during busy seasons of life! Harvest season is a prime example of how busy times can impact healthy eating. During these busy times, individuals are impacted by long days and hours, so there is rarely time to sit down for a meal. Most of the time mealtimes are on the go, in the field, at a gas station, etc. A couple other reasons for why healthy eating is impacted during harvest or busy seasons of life is that there may be limited healthy options available especially in rural areas. Harvest time is also an added stress in our lives which can contribute to changes in eating patterns that tend to lead to an increased consumption of high sugar and high fat foods. A healthy eating pattern doesn't mean a complete diet overhaul but rather making small changes that lead to a healthier lifestyle!

It is especially important to plan ahead during these busy seasons so that you are prepared for when mealtime comes around. Here are a few tips and tricks or small shifts that you can include in your daily routine to make busy seasons of life and harvest time more enjoyable and healthier!

#### Small shifts towards a healthier eating pattern:

- Shift to whole grain bread, pasta, wraps, or rice.
- Shift to water or unsweetened tea rather than sugar sweetened beverages or pop.
- Shift to lean proteins including white meat chicken, lean beef, and pork.
- Choose healthy food preparation methods like roasting, steaming, or air frying.

- Include a serving of fruit with your meals like an apple, unsweetened dried fruit, or 100% fruit juice.
- Add a vegetable to sandwiches, wraps, or as a side!
- Choose low fat dairy with low fat milk, yogurt, and cheeses.
- Vary your protein including eggs, nuts, beans, and seeds.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, this could include an apple and some baby carrots for lunch or a baked potato and bagged salad with dinner.

This information was adapted from Food in the Field. To find out more information or want to learn more about Food in the Field visit <https://food.unl.edu/foodinthefield> or call Buffalo County Extension at 308-236-1235.

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