



ABC'S of Feeding Preschoolers

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DAILY FOOD CHOICES

The FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID outlines daily food choices for a healthy heart, bones, and muscles. The food provides the nutrients to work together for growth and wellness. Variety, balance, and moderation are the key. For small children, avoid foods in a form that may cause choking, such as grapes, nuts, hot dog chunks, or carrot circles.

Provide food variety in amounts similar to the serving size recommended. Precise servings are not important. Limit use of fats, oils, and sweets to promote health and decrease disease risks such as dental caries, diabetes, and heart disease. However, some fat is needed daily for normal growth and health.

Children may "eat like a bird" sometimes, and "eat everything in sight" at other times. Kids usually balance their calorie intake to their needs. Use growth charts to track height-weight patterns. For children who are growing normally, don't worry about appetite ups and downs.

The shape of the Food Guide Pyramid shows proportions - more servings of breads and cereals are needed than other food groups. No one group is more important than another. Children need the same numbers of servings as adults. Except for milk, the suggested serving sizes for each food group are reduced by one-third.

The Food Guide Pyramid
A Guide to Daily Food Choices

Key
● Fat (naturally occurring and added)
▼ Sugars (added)

These Symbols show fat and added sugars in foods. They come mostly from the fats, oils, and sweets group. But foods in other groups - such as cheese or ice cream from the milk group or french fries from the vegetable group - can also provide fat and added sugars.

Fats, Oils & Sweets
Use Sparingly

Milk, Yogurt, & Cheese Group
2-3 Servings

Vegetable Group
3-5 Servings

Fruit Group
2-4 Servings

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, & Nuts Group
2-3 Servings

Bread, Cereal, Rice, & Pasta Group
6-11 Servings

Looking at the Pieces of the Pyramid
The Food Guide Pyramid emphasizes foods from the five major food groups shown in the three major sections of the Pyramid. Each of these food groups provides some, but not all, of the nutrients that you need. Foods in one group can't replace those in another. No one of these major food groups is more important than another - for good health, you need them all.

**PYRAMID POWER -
QUESTIONS FOR HEALTH
AND WELLNESS**

In the *FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID*.

Name the foods

Name 5-A-DAY fruits and vegetables.

Name foods high in fat and sugar.

Name foods low in fat and sugar.

Name foods you eat that are whole grain.

Count the number of foods in each food group that you ate at lunch or as a snack.

Name foods in the Food Guide Pyramid eaten by family members.

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PRESCHOOLERS' FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

PYRAMID POINTERS: Practice lifetime nutrition skills. Name foods and amounts to plan for a child's meal. Name food activities for preschoolers' experiences.

Check: More than 6 choices from the Use Sparingly column is an alert. How can high fat/sugar foods be made low in fat or sugar?



Children: 2-6 Years/Serving Sizes	USE SPARINGLY	B	L	D	S	MENU
MILK-YOGURT-CHEESE 2 servings 1 cup milk 8 ounces yogurt 1 1/2 ounces natural cheese 2 ounces processed cheese	ice cream pizza quiche					
MEAT-POULTRY-FISH-EGGS-NUTS Servings totaling 3 to 4 ounces lean 1 ounce lean meat, fish, poultry 1/2 cup cooked dried beans 1 egg	sausage/bacon hot dog luncheon meat peanut butter fried food					
FRUITS-2 Servings (Fruit drink does not count) small piece of fruit small melon wedge 1/2 cup fruit juice 1/3 cup berries, sliced or cooked fruit 3 tablespoons dried fruit	fruit pie fried apples					
VEGETABLES-3 Servings (Dark green and deep orange; starchy, dry beans/peas) 1/3 cup cooked or raw 2/3 cup raw leafy greens	french fries fried vegs potato chips					
BREAD, CEREAL, RICE AND PASTA 6 servings (several whole grain) 1/2 -1 slice bread 1 1/2 large or 3 small crackers 1/3 cup cooked rice, cereal, pasta 2/3 ounces ready-to-eat cereal (1/2 cup) 1/2-1 roll, muffin, or biscuit 1/4-1/2 English muffin, bagel, hamburger bun	cake corn chips pastry croissant cookies					
USE SPARINGLY ● FATS: sour cream, cream cheese, vegetable oil, salad dressing, butter/margarine ▼ SWEETS: sugar, candy, molasses, honey, syrup, soft drinks						

WHAT CAN YOU IMPROVE? _____

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE: HEALTHY FOOD HABITS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

During the first year of life, the baby's weight triples and length increases by 50 percent. From ages 2 through 5, the child grows about 2 1/2 inches in height and gains 4 to 5 pounds a year. Actual calorie needs vary with rates of growth and activity patterns. The energy intake for moderately active children during the preschool years ranges from 1000 to 2400 calories per day.

Q. Should I lower fat content of the child's diet below 30 percent of calories?

- A.** Daily choices from the Food Guide Pyramid with only 4 or 5 Use Sparingly Choices provides about 40 grams of fat or 30 percent calories as fat. Diets with lower fat levels are not recommended during the first two years of life because fat is needed daily for growth. Excessive restrictions can result in starvation, failure to thrive, or delayed growth.

Nationwide food habit surveys report fat intakes greater than 30 percent calories as fat for children. Dietary guidelines recommend limiting fat in children as young as 2 years to reduce heart disease risks. This does not mean decreasing use of meats or dairy products, but switching from high-fat choices to lean meats and skim or low-fat milk. Always continue whole milk until 2 years of age.

Q. What kind of weight loss diet is recommended for children?

- A.** Obesity in children and adolescents is increasing in the U.S. Weight-loss diets are not recommended for children. They should check that fats and sweets are used sparingly to slow their rate of weight gain as they grow into height. Promote a lifestyle that includes physical activity.

Q. How can I limit fat and sugar in my child's diet without denying treats?

- A.** Sugars and fats are found in many celebration and fast food choices. Use the Food Guide Pyramid to plan daily food choices and activities for preschoolers.

Q. Should salt be limited for children?

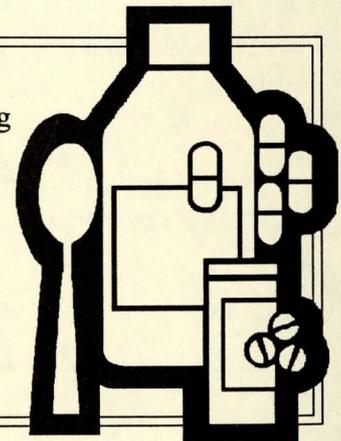
- A.** Choosing fresh foods from the Food Guide Pyramid provides safe levels of sodium. Processed foods (soups, canned vegetables, vending machine snacks) and brined/cured/salted foods (sauerkraut) are concentrated sources of sodium. Serve these salty foods less often. Read labels for the words sodium and salt. Limit the use of salt in cooking and at the table.

Q. Should children clean the plate at meal time? eat at set meal times? taste everything on the plate? eat what family members eat? exercise?

- A.** Young children usually know when they are full. Urging them to eat more can cause problems with overeating later in life. Plan Food Guide Pyramid foods at meal and snack times. Talk with all family members about choices and what happens when they eat less nutritious food (feel unwell, have dental problems, are tired). What activities can family members do together for nutrition, exercise and health?

VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS

Food choices from *The FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID* provide nutrients without depending on supplements or on highly fortified foods. Vitamin deficiency in U.S. children is rare. Supplements are given to children for a short time to help overcome problems. If you use vitamin supplements, 1) check the expiration date; 2) select age appropriate multivitamin supplements containing about 100 percent of the child's Recommended Dietary Allowances. Do not megadose with 10 or 20 times the recommended amount; 3) select vitamins with the greatest number of nutrients, not substances for which no requirement is known; and 4) keep out of reach of children to prevent iron poisoning.



♥ FAMILY PYRAMID POWER ♥ CHILDREN'S HEALTHY EATING HABITS

TEACH CHILDREN FOOD CHOICE SKILLS USING THE FOLLOWING TECHNIQUES.

♥ FOOD CHOICES

Providing the right foods results in nutritious food choices by the child, even if the child is a picky eater. The trick is to provide a variety of nutritious choices from the Food Guide Pyramid. Do not have high fat/high sweet foods available to fill up the child or to reward for behaviors.

♥ MODELING

Children eat what they see others eating at meals and snacks. If you drink milk, they drink milk. If you eat vegetables, they eat vegetables. If you fill up on junk food, the child fills up on junk food. Be the child's model.

♥ FAMILIARITY

Children eat what they experience - foods they learn to prepare and to eat, foods they see in the grocery store, food habits they see on television.

♥ REWARD - PUNISHMENT

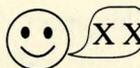
Do not send children away from the table as punishment. Do not reward with sweets for "good" behaviors. "YUCKY" food (healthy food) is often eaten to obtain "YUMMY" food (rich treats). Foods used as rewards, celebrations, and treats are usually high in fat, sugar, and salt. Do an image check for YUMMY- YUCKY FOODS with children for meanings, hidden messages, and food choices.

♥ PARENTING STYLE

Permissive or Authoritative Caregiving styles do not matter. More important is consistency (not loving one minute and hating the next; one caregiver not dominating or contradicting the other) and appropriateness (not denying meals or rewarding with rich food choices; cheerleading ("you're wonderful"); or not saying "No" when the child's safety is at risk.

♥ INTERACTION

PCI (Parent-child-interaction) teaches the child to cope, figure things out, and make decisions - each telling ideas, asking questions, listening to others, and letting others know they are OK. To increase PCI, use the **WHAT DO YOU THINK GAME** activities to talk about ideas.

♥ GAME: WHAT DO YOU THINK? Share ideas and talk about feelings.				
1) Pick a family:	your family	another family	TV family	TV ad family
2) Pick a topic:	favorite food celebration food a television example yummy-yucky foods	new food experience sugar a surprise favorite bread	fat food for illness a carried food favorite vegetable	place to eat salt kitchen activity
3) Pick a response:	ASK 	LISTEN 	TELL 	HUG 