

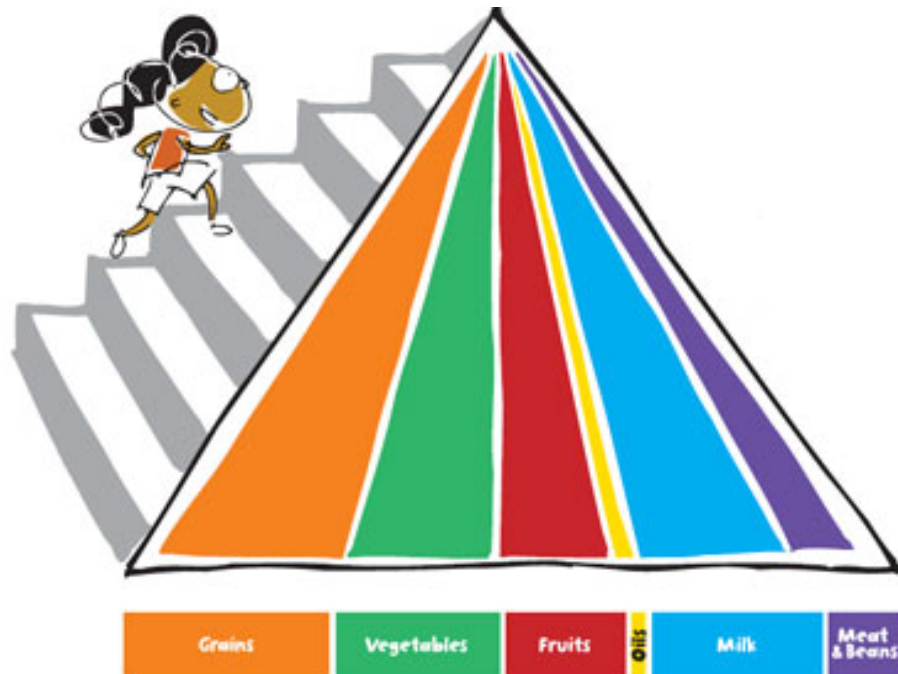


## Healthy Eating in Early Childhood

### Healthy Eating Tip of the Month February, 2009

We tend to think of our children as little people, but when our toddler starts eating table food, how much does she need? Should he be eating a whole sandwich, a half? What's a balanced meal for a child? How many fruits and vegetables should be offered? What if my child hates broccoli?

Here are a few suggestions for Healthy Eating in Early Childhood



## Importance of the Food Groups

Milk and dairy provide calcium for strong bones and teeth, protein for growth, and Vitamins A and D for eyes and bone. Use whole milk until age 2, then you can switch to low fat dairy products.

Grains, especially whole grains, provide natural vitamins, minerals and fiber. They provide the fuel to keep your child on the go.

Meat, fish, poultry, beans and eggs provide protein for growth. But if your child isn't getting enough energy from the other food sources, the protein will be used as fuel instead of growth!

Fruits and Vegetables provide natural sources of vitamins and fiber. Try a variety of colors and textures. It will keep you child interested and insure that she gets all her vitamins. It is recommended to have a serving from Vitamin C containing fruits

and vegetables every day, and from Vitamin A containing food at least every other day.



### **Vitamin A**

Peaches  
Watermelon  
Apricots  
Mango  
Carrots  
Spinach

### **Vitamin C**

Oranges  
Grapefruit  
Strawberries  
Potatoes  
Green Pepper  
Cabbage

### **Both Vitamins A and C**

Asparagus  
Broccoli  
Tomatoes  
Sweet Red Peppers  
Cantaloupe

# Suggested Serving Sizes for Early Childhood

Food Group		Ages 1-3 Years	Ages 4-6 Years	Number of Servings Per Day
<b>Grains</b>				
	Bread	1/4 - 1/2 slice	1/2 slice	
	Pancake	1/2 small	1 small	
	Ready-to-Eat cereal	1/4 - 1/2 cup	1/2 cup	4 to 8
	Cooked cereal	1/4 - 1/3 cup	1/2 cup	
	Rice/Pasta/Noodles	1/4 - 1/3 cup	1/2 cup	
	Crackers	2-4 two inch	5-6 two inch	
<b>Vegetables</b>				
	Cooked or raw, chopped	1/4 - 1/3 cup	1/2 cup	Combined 5-6 servings of fruits and vegetables
	Raw leafy	1/2 - 2/3 cup	1 cup	
	Spaghetti sauce	1/4 - 1/3 cup	1/2 cup	
	Juice	1/3 - 1/2 cup	1/2 cup	
<b>Fruit</b>				
	Fresh fruit pieces	1/4 - 1/3 cup	1/2 cup	Combined 5-6 servings of fruits and vegetables
	Canned or jarred	1/4 - 1/3 cup	1/2 cup	
	Dried fruit, chopped	2 - 3 TBSP	1/4 cup	
	Juice	1/3 - 1/2 cup	1/2 cup	
<b>Meat and Meat Alternates</b>				
	Meat or Poultry or Fish	1 oz	1 oz	2-4 oz
	Eggs	1/2 egg	1 egg	(ages 1-3)
	Beans, cooked	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	
	Peanut butter	2 TBSP	2 TBSP	4-6 oz
	Canned salmon, tuna	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	(ages 4-6)
	Tofu	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	
<b>Dairy</b>				
	Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3 servings
	Yogurt	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	(ages 1-3)
	Block cheese	1 inch cube	1 inch cube	5 servings
	Processed cheese	1 slice	1 slice	(ages 4-6)

## Little Helpers

One of the easiest ways to interest your child in healthy food choices is to let him help in the kitchen. Here are some things that even the youngest toddler can do:

### Your 2 Year Old can:

Wipe the table

Hand items to an adult to put away - like the groceries

Tear lettuce or greens

Rinse fruit or vegetables

### Your 3 Year Old can:

Stir pancake batter

Name and count foods

Help assemble a pizza

Scoop mashed potatoes



### Your 4 Year Old can:

Set the table

Peel a hard boiled egg

Peel an orange or banana

Help measure ingredients

Help make sandwiches

### Your 5 Year Old can:

Measure liquids

Cut soft fruits (peaches, pears) with a dull knife

Use an egg beater or whisk

Adapted from Kitchen Activities at <http://mypyramid.gov>

# Let's Get Moving!

Children should be physically active at least 60 minutes throughout the day. But that can include a lot of the activities our children do normally such as:



Playing at the park

Bike riding

Jump rope

Swimming



Martial arts

Dancing

Soccer

Dog walking

Car washing



Or just running around the backyard

**So turn off the TV and video games, and Get Moving!**

## Recipes:

Here are a couple quick and easy meal ideas:

### Chunky Chicken Salad Sandwich

Makes 2 sandwiches

Prep Time 10 minutes

Cooking Time 0-8 minutes



#### Ingredients:

6oz leftover skinless chicken breast or rotisserie chicken, cut into small, bite size chunks

$\frac{1}{4}$  cucumber, diced

2 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped

2 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

2 Tbsp olive oil

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup balsamic vinegar

Juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lemon, or to taste

4 slices whole wheat bread

2 tsp soft butter (optional)

In a bowl, mix all ingredients except bread and butter. Toast bread or, to grill, spread one side of each slice with butter. Spoon half the chicken salad onto a slice of toast (or bread, butter side down). Top with another piece of toast (or bread, butter side up). If grilling, place in a skillet on low heat for about 3-4 minutes on each side, or until lightly browned. Cut in half.

#### Nutritional Facts:

Each  $\frac{1}{2}$  sandwich: 212 calories, 15g protein, 16g carbohydrates, 2g fiber, 10g fat (2g saturated), 36mg cholesterol, 2mg iron, 24mg calcium, 116mg sodium.

## Pesto Pasta Salad

Makes 12 servings

Prep Time 15 minutes

Cooking Time 10 minutes



### Ingredients:

1 lb orzo pasta

2 cups basil, chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$  grated Parmesan cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive oil

1 garlic clove

5 pitted black olives

2 large, ripe tomatoes, diced

Cook orzo according to the package directions. Drain and place in a bowl with very cold water and a few drops of olive oil so it cools fast. Drain again.

In a food processor, pulse basil, cheese, remaining oil, garlic, and olives until mixed.

In a large bowl, stir together pasta, basil mixture, and tomatoes.

### Nutritional Facts:

Each serving: 236 calories, 4g protein, 32g carbohydrates, 1g fiber, 10g fat (2g saturated), 2mg cholesterol, 2mg iron, 53mg calcium, 82mg sodium.

Recipes from: <http://www.parents.com/recipes/entertaining/celebrity-chefs/todd-englishs-lunch-box-recipes/?page=3>

## Healthy Snacks

It seems when we mention "Snacks", some of us immediately think of chips or cookies. Mention "Healthy Snacks" and some of us think boring. Here are just a few fun snack ideas that your child may enjoy, and you have the satisfaction that she is eating healthy (but you don't have to tell her that).

Smear a scoop of frozen yogurt on two graham crackers and add sliced banana to make a yummy sandwich.

Make a snack kabob with cubes of low fat cheese and grapes on a pretzel stick.

Toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced peaches

Make a mini-sandwich with tuna or egg salad on a dinner roll

Fill a waffle cone with cut-up fruit and top with low-fat vanilla yogurt

Spread mustard on a slice of deli turkey and wrap around a sesame seed breadstick for an "inside out" sandwich

## Let's Dip It

Dip mini-toaster waffles in cinnamon applesauce

Dip pita chips in hummus

Dip strawberries or apple slices in low-fat yogurt

Dip animal crackers in low-fat pudding

### But what if you're on the run?

Try stashing some of the following in the car

Cheese or peanut butter crackers

Small containers of cereal

Pretzels

Plain popcorn

Dried fruit

Or make your own trail mix with small pretzels, cheerios or other dry cereal, dried cherries or banana chips, yogurt-covered raisins or peanuts, sprinkle in a few butterscotch, chocolate chips or mini M&Ms and keep a few baggies of it in your purse or the glove compartment.

Visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) for more Food and Nutrition ideas.

## Introducing New Foods to Picky Eaters

Let your child be a "produce picker" at the grocery store or market. Make it an adventure to try something new.

Offer new foods at the beginning of the meal, before your child fills up on the familiar foods.

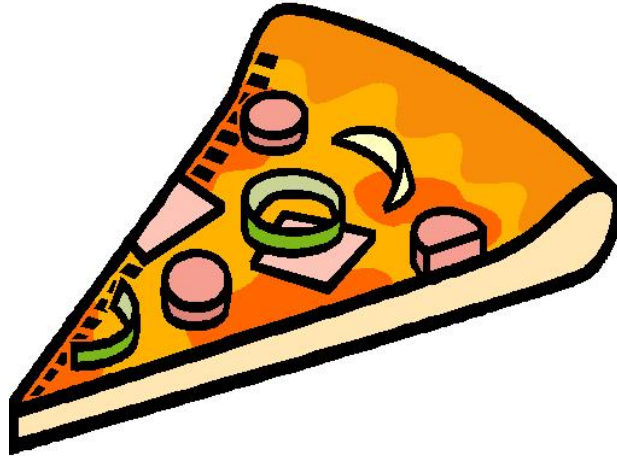
You know your child best. For some, the peas can't touch the rice which can't touch the grilled chicken. Others like to mix everything on their plate. Use whichever method is best for the "new food."

Have your child choose from a variety of foods, such as "do you want green beans, carrots or peas?"

Continue to offer a previously rejected food (but don't remind your child that he didn't like it last time!). Your child may see the food 10-15 times before he'll taste or eat it. So don't give up after the first few trials.

Don't be a "short order cook". Offer the same foods for the whole family. It will be okay even if your child doesn't eat a meal now and then.

Adapted from How to Cope with Picky Eaters and Trying New Foods at <http://mypyramid.gov>



## The truth about Pizza

How many birthday parties has your child been to where they have served pizza! While this is usually considered a junk food, think about it. It actually contains a number of the food groups in one convenient package. Sausage, pepperoni and hamburger are all excellent sources of protein. The crust belongs to the grain group. Tomato sauce, mushrooms, green pepper and onion cover the vegetable group. And dairy weighs in with the cheese.

### General Tidbits:

- Try to get your child to eat from each of the food groups every day, but don't sweat it. If it doesn't happen, try the next best thing, which is to balance out the food groups over a couple of days.
- Children require smaller portions, but need to eat more frequently than you do. A mid-morning, mid-afternoon and evening snack are very common for this age group, in addition to breakfast, lunch and dinner.

- And don't forget breakfast! Research shows that breakfast skippers often feel tired, irritable or restless in the morning. Eating even a small breakfast can help restore needed fuel for the morning.
- A general children's vitamin, like Flintstones or Scooby-Doo is not harmful, but should not be used in place of well balanced meals. Vitamins alone will not supply your child with calories, protein and other nutrients that are needed for growth.
- Healthy fats are very important for children. They are a concentrated source of energy, and should provide about 1/3 of daily calories averaged over several days. Fat helps the brain and central nervous system develop. Healthy fats are those monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in peanut butter, olive oil, salad dressings and soft margarine. Limit any extra saturated fats, and eliminate those nasty trans-fats.
- If fruit drinks or juices are offered in place of milk, your child may not get the calcium and other minerals needed for proper bone growth. Try to limit fruit juice to 4-6 oz/day. Soda, sports drinks and punches should be eliminated or at least limited to one serving/day. Water quenches thirst best.

## In the News:



### **TV, Internet Causing Kids Harm**

In a recent review of 173 studies on media and health conducted over the last three decades, 80% of the studies concluded that higher amounts of television and other media exposure were associated with negative health effects in children, the strongest association being between media content (including advertising and content within the shows being watched) and obesity. It is recommended that parents limit their children's exposure to media and make wise, age-appropriate decisions for their children. Further research into the content of digital media (video games, the Internet, and cell phones) is suggested, as exposure to the electronic age increases.



### **The Rise in Peanut Allergies**

There have been a growing number of children diagnosed with peanut and other allergies over the last 10 years. In 2007, approximately 3 million children (or 4% of children under the age of 18) were reported to have a food allergy, compared to 2.3 million (3.3% of children) in 1997. While experts may agree that the incidence of food allergies has increased, there isn't much consensus as to why. Some attribute it to an overly hygienic lifestyle that may interfere with a child's ability to build up proper immunities; some believe that the reported increase is a combination of a real increase in allergies combined with an increase in awareness and diagnosis. And while one study at Duke University Medical Center indicated a decline in the age of first peanut reaction from 22-24 months to 14-18 months, the researchers attributed the decline to earlier exposure (first exposure at 19 months compared to 14 months). It has been shown that children with food allergies are two to four times more likely to have asthma or other allergies. It is not known what causes a food allergy. They are more common in children than adults, and many children may "outgrow" them.

For more information on [Healthy Eating in Early Childhood](#), please visit the U of M Hospital main cafeteria and look for the [Healthy Eating Tip of the Month](#) bulletin board.

While there, you can also enter to win a

**Melissa & Doug wooden toy "food group" set**



The 21 pieces of food are divided into dairy, meat & fish, fruits & vegetables, and breads. Each group comes in its own storage box for sorting, stacking and storing.

## Related Web Sites

Visit these web sites for more information on  
**Healthy Eating in Early Childhood**

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

[www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)

[www.mom-rd.com](http://www.mom-rd.com)

[www.MyPyramid.gov/preschoolers](http://www.MyPyramid.gov/preschoolers)

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus)

[www.nutritionexplorations.org](http://www.nutritionexplorations.org)

[www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org)

[www.udim.org](http://www.udim.org)

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