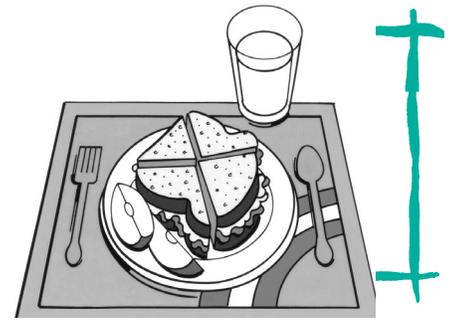


# What's to Eat?

## Healthy Foods For Hungry Children



### The Food Guide Pyramid—A Menu for Good Health

Ask anyone who cares for children—feeding kids can be challenging! The Food Guide Pyramid is a tool for helping you plan meals and snacks for your family. The advice is given for one day\*. This brochure gives meal suggestions that are tasty, convenient and nutritious. From breakfast through dinner, these ideas will please even the fussiest eater. For specific food and nutrition advice, talk to your child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian.

\*The amount of food and number of servings children need daily from each food group depends on their age and how active they are.

### Active Play is Important, Too!

Physical activity, along with proper nutrition, promotes lifelong health. Active play is the best exercise for kids! Parents can join their children and have fun while being active, too. Some fun activities for parents and kids to do together include playing on swings, riding tricycles or bicycles, jumping rope, flying a kite, making a snowman, swimming or dancing.

### Off to a Good Start...The Breakfast Bonus

Breakfast provides energy to carry a child through an active morning. Children who skip breakfast may not concentrate well at school or may lack energy to play. Not everyone enjoys traditional breakfast foods, such as cereal and toast. These breakfast ideas are a little different:

- Breakfast shake: combine skim or 1% milk\*, fruit and ice in a blender.
- Frozen banana: dip a banana in yogurt, then roll it in crushed cereal. Freeze.
- Peanut butter spread on crackers, a tortilla, apple slices or jicama slices.
- Leftover spaghetti, chicken or pizza: serve hot or cold!

\* Skim and 1% milk are recommended for children over two years old. Children under two years of age should only drink whole milk.

### Cereal Choices

Cereal with milk is the number-one breakfast favorite. Check the Nutrition Facts label—found on most packaged foods—for the amount of iron, other nutrients and fiber. Look at the % Daily Values to find how much.

If your child prefers a sweet taste, you might jazz up unsweetened cereal with sliced peaches or bananas, strawberries, or blueberries.

### Lunches Worth Munchin'

Children who help make their own lunches are more likely to eat them. Include these brown bag perks to make lunches fun!

- Use cookie cutters to cut sandwiches in fun, interesting shapes.
- Decorate lunch bags with colorful stickers.
- Put a new twist on a sandwich favorite. Top peanut butter with raisins, bananas or apple slices.
- For color and crunch, use a variety of veggies as "sandwich toppers": cucumber slices, sprouts, grated carrots or zucchini.

### Brown Bag Food Safety

Remember the golden rule for food safety:

#### Keep Hot Foods Hot and Cold Foods Cold.

When there's no refrigerator to store a bag lunch, keep food safe by:

- Tucking an ice- or freezer-pack into the lunch bag. Or use an insulated container to keep hot foods hot.
- Adding a box of frozen fruit juice.
- Freezing the sandwich bread and filling—or other freezable foods—the night before.

You may also help prevent food-borne illness by:

- Encouraging your child to wash his or her hands thoroughly before meals.

### Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

A Daily Guide for 2- to 6-Year-Olds



## Did You Know That...

Most regular deli meats, such as salami and bologna, are very high in fat. Try reduced-fat deli meats. Turkey breast, ham and roast beef are usually lower-fat choices. Check the Nutrition Facts label on packaged meats to learn the fat content.

Pretzels, baked tortilla chips and baked potato chips are virtually fat-free and make a good alternative for potato chips and other high-fat snacks.

## The Meal Dilemma... Dealing with Picky Eaters

Even the most nutritious meal won't do any good if a child refuses to eat it. Some youngsters are naturally finicky eaters. Others eat only certain foods—or refuse food—as a way to assert themselves. If your child refuses one food from a group, try offering a substitute from the same food group of the Food Guide Pyramid. Try these ideas to make your family meals happy ones:

### If Your Child Refuses... Instead Try...

Green vegetables	Deep-yellow or orange vegetables
Milk	Chocolate milk, cheese, yogurt
Beef	Chicken, turkey, fish, pork

- Boost the nutritional value of prepared dishes with extra ingredients. Perhaps add nonfat dry milk to cream soups, milkshakes and puddings. Or mix grated zucchini and carrots into quick breads, muffins, meatloaf, lasagna and soups.
- Serve a food your child enjoys along with a food that he or she has refused to eat in the past.
- Try serving a food again if it was refused before. It may take many tries before a child likes it.
- Let children help with food preparation. It can make eating a food more fun.
- Add eye appeal. Cut foods into interesting shapes. Or create a smiling face on top of a casserole with cheese, vegetables or fruit strips.
- Set a good example by eating well yourself. Whenever possible, eat meals as a family.

## How Much Food Is Enough?

Some parents worry because young children seem to eat small amounts of food, especially when compared with adult portions. Don't worry about how little a child eats. A child who is growing well is getting enough to eat.

## Hungry And In a Hurry? Food for Fast Times

When it comes to food, families want convenience. It's no surprise that fast-food restaurants are so popular. However, some fast foods supply a lot of fat and calories. These tips help you get the most from foods that are fast:

- Most fast foods can fit within a healthful eating plan. Children and adults can afford to eat these foods every once in a while if other food choices are sensible. Try these ways to enjoy them:
  - Share:* split an order of fries with other family members.
  - Choose food-group foods:* in combination meals, substitute fruit juice or skim or 1% milk\* for soft drinks.
  - Balance high-fat choices with low-fat choices:* order a small hamburger and the salad bar for your child. Kids like the fresh fruit, carrot sticks and broccoli florets.

- Most fast-food spots offer lower-fat choices: salad bar (low-fat dressing), plain baked potatoes (topped with salad bar veggies), chili, skim or 1% milk\*, low-fat frozen yogurt, English muffins, fruit juice and grilled (non-fried) chicken sandwiches.
- Supermarkets offer a variety of nutritious foods that are fast. Ready-made deli sandwiches (made with reduced-fat deli meats), fresh fruits and the salad bar are some "fast foods" from the grocery store.

\* Children under two years of age should *only* drink whole milk.

## Microwave Magic—Safely!

A microwave oven can help you cook in a healthful way. Vegetables cooked in a microwave oven stay nutrient-rich. For one reason, nutrients don't dissolve in any cooking water; short cooking time is another factor. Meat, fish and poultry dishes can be cooked or reheated with little or no added fat.

Microwaving also can help you cook faster and easier. But it can pose potential hazards—especially when children cook with the microwave oven. BURNS are the most common microwave injury. Children can be burned by:

- Removing dishes from the microwave oven—*make sure they use a pot holder.*
- Spilling hot foods—*keep the oven out of a young child's reach.*
- Opening microwave popcorn packages and other containers—*show older children how to open the container so steam escapes away from their hands and face.*
- Eating food that is cooked unevenly or has "hot spots"—*show older children how to stir food well before tasting it, or let food "rest" so that heat distributes evenly.*

**Here's a common sense rule for microwave ovens:** *If children are too young to read or follow written directions, they are too young to use a microwave oven without supervision.*

This brochure was developed as part of the **HEALTHY START...Food to Grow On** program, an information and education campaign that promotes healthful food choices and eating habits for healthy children ages two years and over. The **HEALTHY START** program was produced as a cooperative effort by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The American Dietetic Association (ADA), and the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Food pyramid courtesy of USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.

From your doctor

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of Pediatrics



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