

Healthy Eating in Kids



Giving your child healthy foods helps nourish her body and mind and helps her grow. To teach your child to make healthy food choices, learn about nutritious food options and healthy ways to prepare them. You can find out a lot about the foods you eat by reading nutrition labels with your child. Together, determine which foods are healthy and which ones have empty calories (high calories, low nutrition). Also, pay attention to serving sizes. One serving is often smaller than you would expect.

Helping Your Child Eat a Healthy Diet

To help your child make healthy food choices, you can:

- **Make sure she eats breakfast**, so she has more energy for school.
- **Make fast food and other high-calorie foods like chips and cookies, “once-in-a-while” foods.**
- **Encourage healthy snacking.** Give your child healthy snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat yogurt or whole-grain cereal.
- **Get your child involved in meals.** Let her help make dinner or help pack her school lunch.
- **Make time to have family dinners.** This will help you introduce healthy habits to your child.
- **Limit desserts and sweets.** For example, have fruit for dessert or only have dessert once a week.

Food Pyramid

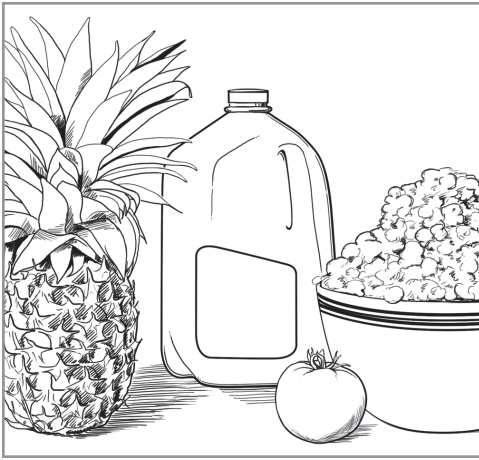
The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) MyPyramid emphasizes:

- **Variety**—eating foods from each food group
- **Proportion**—eating the recommended amount of food from each group
- **Moderation**—limiting your child’s intake of saturated and trans fats, added sugars, cholesterol and salt
- **Activity**—being physically active every day

The pyramid is made up of these food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, meat/beans and oils. How much food your child needs depends on her age, sex and physical activity. The chart below is for children who are active at least 60 minutes a day. Children who are less active may need fewer calories. Your doctor can help you determine how many calories your child needs.

	Ages 2-3		Ages 4-8		Ages 9-13		Ages 14-18	
	Girls & Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	
Daily Intake*	1,400 cal.	1,800 cal.	2,000 cal.	2,200 cal.	2,600 cal.	2,400 cal.	3,200 cal.	
Grains	5 oz.	6 oz.	6 oz.	7 oz.	9 oz.	8 oz.	10 oz.	
Vegetables	1.5 cup	2.5 cups	2.5 cups	3 cups	3.5 cups	3 cups	4 cups	
Fruits	1.5 cup	1.5 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups	
Dairy	2 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	3 cups	
Meat/Beans	4 oz.	5 oz.	5.5 oz.	6 oz.	6.5 oz.	6.5 oz.	7 oz.	

*These guidelines are for children who are active at least 60 minutes a day. Talk to your doctor about your child’s needs.



To learn more, visit
**HealthyAdvice.com/
KidsNutrition**

You can also visit these
websites:

- **International Food Information Council**
www.ific.org
- **KidsHealth (Nemours Foundation)**
www.kidshealth.org
- **USDA: MyPyramid**
www.mypyramid.gov

How to Fit Healthy Foods into Your Child's Diet

Whole Grains. Give your child whole-grain foods for snacking, like popcorn. Try brown rice or whole-grain pasta. Make sandwiches on whole-grain bread or whole-grain tortillas.

Meats and Proteins. Bake, broil or grill lean meats and fish, and cut away extra fat. Serve beans instead of meats.

Vegetables. Add a variety of colored veggies to dishes, like corn, green peppers and tomatoes. Have raw carrots and celery for snacks.

Fruits. Let your child pick a new fruit each time you go to the store. Use fruits or dried fruits for snacking, and serve fruit for dessert. If your child likes juice, offer drinks with 100-percent fruit juice, but remember that fruit juice is high in sugar and calories.

Milk. Use low-fat cheese and sour cream in snacks and meals. Add milk, instead of water, to hot cereal or oatmeal. Drink low-fat or fat-free milk at meals or snack time. If your child is under age 2, give her whole milk.

What to Do if Your Child Is Overweight

If your child eats too many calories and doesn't exercise enough, she might become overweight. Because she's growing, it's healthy for her to gain weight, but not too much weight. If your child is overweight, your doctor will help you make a weight-loss plan. It's important not to put your child on a diet without talking to your doctor first.

One of the best ways to help your overweight child is for you to be a positive role model by making healthy eating choices, being physically active and having a healthy weight.

Remember:

- Learn which foods give your child important nutrients, and then prepare them in healthy ways.
- Follow the food pyramid's recommendations.
- Set a positive example for your child by making healthy food choices.
- Talk to your doctor if your child is overweight.

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