

HEALTHY EATING for Children



Guidelines for Children 6 to 12 Years Old

Let your child help you plan and prepare meals, such as choosing a fruit at the store, setting the table, or making the salad.

HEALTHY EATING

What your child eats can have a great impact on his or her health and weight now and in the future. Healthy eating habits can prevent problems such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

- School-age children need a variety of healthy foods to help them grow, learn, and be active.
- Children learn by example. Be a good role model for your child by eating healthy foods, exercising, and setting limits.
- Your child's daily diet should include foods from all the food groups, but **children do not need adult-sized portions.**
- Teach good eating habits by making eating fun and pleasant.
- Show children that eating is more fun when shared with family and friends.

HEALTHY HABITS

Check off what you are willing to try:

- Let your child help you plan and prepare meals, such as choosing a fruit at the store, setting the table, or making the salad.
- Teach your child to wash his or her hands when handling food.
- Eat your meals at a table away from the TV or computer.
- Eat at least one meal a day as a family.



- Limit eating out to one or two times a week. (See the “Healthy Eating Food Guide” for better choices.)
- Eat more home-cooked meals.
- Make sure your child eats breakfast every day** to boost energy and fuel his or her brain.
- Offer foods with different colors, shapes, and textures.
- Encourage, but do not force, your child to try new foods. If he or she does not like a food, try again at a later date.
- Include some disliked or new foods with old favorites.
- Have healthy snacks on hand (see the “Snack Time” section) instead of chips or snacks with added sugar.
- Give your child enough time to finish a meal.
- Do not force your child to eat all the food on his or her plate.
- Do not use food as a reward or punishment.



CHOOSE A HEALTHY PLATE EACH DAY

The healthy plate is an easy way to help your family get the right amount of food at each meal.

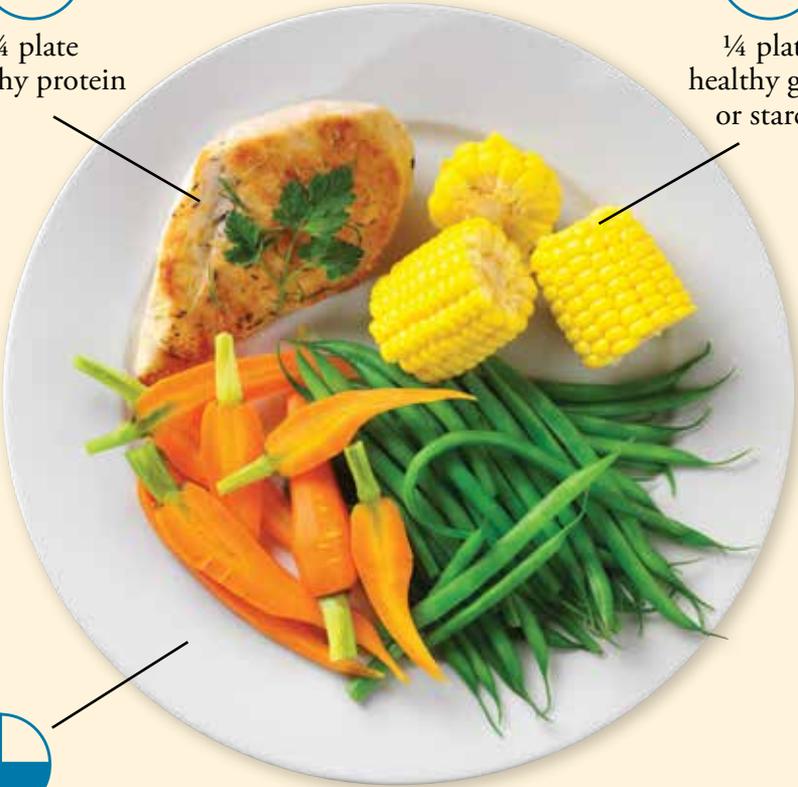
Portion your plate and servings as shown for a healthy meal:



1/4 plate healthy protein



1/4 plate healthy grain or starch



1/2 plate nonstarchy vegetables

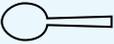


1 serving fruit



8 ounces milk

WHAT'S IN YOUR DRINK?

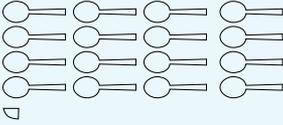
 = 1 teaspoon of sugar

 = 1 teaspoon of fat



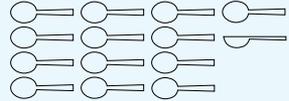
Cola

20 ounces =
240 calories
16¼ teaspoons of sugar



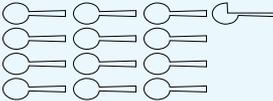
Energy Drink

16 ounces =
200 calories
13½ teaspoons of sugar



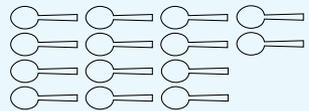
Fruit Juice Drink

16 ounces =
210 calories
12¾ teaspoons of sugar



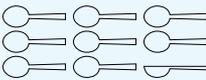
100% Orange Juice

16 ounces =
240 calories
14 teaspoons of sugar



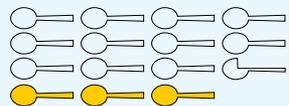
Sports Drink

20 ounces =
130 calories
8½ teaspoons of sugar



Blended Coffee Drink with Whipped Cream

16 ounces =
380 calories
11¾ teaspoons of sugar
3 teaspoons of fat



Sugary drinks are one of the main causes of weight gain and obesity.

Healthier Drinks to Choose

- Drink 6 to 8 cups of water a day instead of sugary, high-calorie drinks such as juice, regular soda, energy drinks, sports drinks, smoothies, milk shakes, or coffee drinks.
- Choose zero-calorie flavored mineral water or essence water.

Check off the no-calorie drinks your family is willing to try:

- Water
- Sparkling mineral water
- Water with lemon slices, mint, or other fruits and herbs
- Essence water



CALCIUM REQUIREMENTS

Ages 4 to 8: 1,000 mg (3 servings of fat-free or 1% milk, yogurt, cheese, or unsweetened soy, almond, or other calcium-fortified milk substitute)

Ages 9 to 18: 1,300 mg (4 servings of fat-free or 1% milk, yogurt, cheese, or unsweetened soy, almond, or other calcium-fortified milk substitute)

You can also offer other foods rich in calcium:

- Calcium-fortified juice
- Tofu (calcium set)
- Canned salmon with the bones
- Roasted soybeans
- Broccoli, kale, bok choy, and collard greens



IF YOUR CHILD IS OVERWEIGHT

- Children should not be put on a diet. For many children, the goal is to maintain their weight as they grow.
- Provide three healthy meals and healthy snacks as needed.
- **Avoid extra calories from sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, and smoothies.**
- Avoid fried and overly sweetened foods.
- Choose foods from “Choose More Often” on the “Healthy Eating Food Guide.”
- Serve food using smaller plates, bowls, and glasses.
- Support your child’s self-esteem by accepting, praising, supporting, valuing, and listening to your child.
- Physical activity is very important. See the “Physical Activity” section.

SNACK TIME

Here are some healthy snacks you can try at home instead of chips, cheese puffs, nachos, french fries, cookies, or candy.

Check off what you are willing to try.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any fresh fruit or vegetable | <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal (low sugar) with fat-free milk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apples with almond butter | <input type="checkbox"/> Cottage cheese with pineapple |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blueberries and walnuts | <input type="checkbox"/> Dried apricots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrot and celery sticks with hummus | <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen bananas or grapes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrot sticks with low-fat ranch dressing | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit blended with unsweetened vanilla almond milk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celery sticks or whole-grain crackers with peanut butter and raisins | <input type="checkbox"/> Handful of nuts or trail mix |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baked tortilla chips with salsa | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardboiled egg with whole-grain toast |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pita bread (½) with tuna salad |

- Plain Greek yogurt (fat-free or 1%) with berries
- Popcorn (air-popped or popped in a small amount of oil)
- Raw zucchini or jicama sticks with salsa
- Smoothie with banana, berries, nuts, spinach, and unsweetened almond milk
- Soup with whole-grain crackers
- String cheese with whole-grain crackers
- Turkey slice with whole-grain bread
- Whole-grain tortilla with bean dip
- Whole-grain tortilla with vegetables and hummus

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Encourage your child to play 60 minutes a day. As a parent, you need to limit your child's time spent with the computer, TV, or hand-held or other video games to no more than 2 hours a day.

- Encourage your children to choose activities they enjoy. Try biking, walking, dancing, running, skating, Rollerblading, ball games, or team sports such as soccer, swimming, tennis, or basketball.
- Do active things as a family.
- Be a role model.





SAMPLE MENU

Breakfast

- 1 cup oatmeal with a handful of nuts
- 1 small banana
- 1 cup 1% low-fat milk

Morning Snack

Carrots with hummus

Lunch

Sandwich:

- 2 slices whole-wheat bread
- 2 ounces roast chicken
- 1 teaspoon mayonnaise
- Lettuce, tomato
- 1 cup raw cucumbers, carrots, and cherry tomatoes with 2 tablespoons ranch dressing

1 orange

Water

Afternoon Snack

¼ cup almonds and raisins

Dinner

- 1 cup whole-wheat pasta
- 2 to 3 small turkey meatballs in tomato sauce
- 1 cup mixed salad
- 1 tablespoon salad dressing
- 1 cup 1% low-fat milk

Evening Snack

6 ounces of plain Greek yogurt (no added sweetener) with strawberries

If your child needs to lose weight, talk to your physician or a dietitian for more information.

HEALTHY EATING FOOD GUIDE

Kids: Circle your favorite foods in the “Choose More Often” section.



**Food Group:
Nonstarchy
Vegetables**

(3–5 servings daily)

1 serving =
½ cup cooked
1 cup raw

Choose More Often

- broccoli
- carrots
- cauliflower
- celery
- green beans
- peppers
- salad
- snap peas
- spinach
- tomatoes
- zucchini

Choose Less Often

- vegetables with butter, cheese, or cream sauce
- deep-fried vegetables



**Food Group:
Fruits**

(2–4 servings daily)

1 serving =
1 small piece
½ cup fresh cut, canned,
or frozen
1 cup berries or melon
¼ cup dried

Choose More Often

- apples
- bananas
- blueberries
- cantaloupe
- grapes
- oranges
- pears
- strawberries
- watermelon
- dried apricots
- raisins
- canned fruit in its own juice

Choose Less Often

- smoothies with juice and added sugar
- canned fruit in syrup
- dried fruit with sugar added
- juice



Food Group: Grains and Starchy Vegetables

(6–9 servings daily)

1 serving =

1 slice bread

½ English muffin, bagel, or bun

¾ cup cold cereal

½ cup cooked cereal

½ cup rice or noodles

½ cup starchy vegetables

1 small tortilla

6 small crackers

Choose More Often

- whole-grain:
 - breads, pita, lavash, tortillas, bagels, English muffins
 - unsweetened, whole-grain hot and cold cereals
 - whole-grain crackers
 - whole-wheat noodles
- brown or wild rice
- corn
- peas
- yams
- sweet potatoes
- quinoa
- amaranth
- farro

Choose Less Often

- biscuits
- croissants
- muffins
- granola
- cereals with added sugar
- white-flour tortillas
- white rice
- ramen-type noodles
- toaster pastries
- crackers (cheese, buttery, etc.)
- french fries
- hash browns
- potato tots



Food Group: Milk, Yogurt, Cheese

(2–4 servings daily)

1 serving =

1 cup/8 ounces

1½ to 2 ounces cheese

Choose More Often

- 1% low-fat or fat-free milk
- 1% low-fat or fat-free yogurt without added sugar
- calcium-fortified, unsweetened almond, soy, or other milk alternative
- low-fat cheese
- string cheese

Choose Less Often

- cream
- whole milk
- 2% reduced-fat milk
- whole-milk yogurt with added sugar
- milk shakes
- regular cheese
- processed cheese spreads or processed cheese food



Food Group: Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans, Nuts

(4–6 ounces/servings daily)

1 serving =

1 ounce meat

1 egg

2 tablespoons nut butter

½ cup beans, peas, lentils, tofu, or hummus

Choose More Often

- fresh fish
- light tuna packed in water
- chicken and turkey without skin
- eggs
- old-fashioned peanut butter
- nut butters
- beans
- peas
- lentils
- tofu and soy-bean products
- hummus
- lean lunch meats

Choose Less Often

- high-fat meats
- hot dogs
- hamburgers
- lunch meats
- bologna
- fried meats, chicken, or fish
- spareribs
- corned beef
- pastrami
- sausage
- bacon



Food Group: Fats and Oils

(4–6 servings daily)

1 serving =

1 teaspoon oil, margarine, butter, or mayonnaise

1 tablespoon salad dressing or cream cheese

2 tablespoons avocado, nuts, or nut butter

1½ tablespoons seeds

Choose More Often

- olive or canola oil
- mayonnaise
- salad dressing
- nuts and nut butters
- seeds (chia, flax)
- avocado

Choose Less Often

- butter
- margarine
- lard
- bacon fat
- cream cheese
- sour cream
- vegetable shortening



Food Group: Fast Food

(limit to 1 or
2 times a week)

Choose More Often

- salad
- baked potato
- small roast beef, turkey, or chicken sandwich
- small hamburger
- cheese or vegetable pizza
- brown rice and veggie bowl
- bean and brown rice burrito
- water

Choose Less Often

- french fries
- chili cheese fries
- onion rings
- cheeseburger
- large hamburger
- hot dogs
- croissant or biscuit sandwich
- fried chicken or fish
- fried tacos
- pepperoni or other meat pizza
- sugary drinks
- super-sized portions

