

Feeding Your Child

Ages 2 to 5 years



These are general guidelines for feeding healthy children, ages two to five. Talk with the nutritionist or health care provider for more information on feeding your child.

Eating Habits

Most eating habits are learned in childhood. These habits affect food choices and health throughout life.

To help develop good eating habits, parents should:

- Plan regular mealtimes and snacktimes. Limit eating or drinking between planned mealtimes and snacktimes.
- Serve meals when your child is not tired.
- Eat family meals together. It provides security for children. It is also a time for children to see what and how you eat.
- Keep the television off during mealtime.
- Make mealtime happy.
- Serve foods with bright colors, mild flavors, and a variety of textures.
- Set a good example.
- Pay attention to your child when his or her mealtime behavior is desirable. Behavior that is rewarded is repeated.
- Have healthy foods ready and prepared for quick snacks.
- Plan enough time for play, rest, and sleep.
- Comfort and reward with love and attention, not with food.



Screen Time: Television & Computer Use

- Children 2 years of age and older should watch no more than 1 to 2 hours per day of educational, non-violent television programs.
- Computer use should be limited to no more than 15-minute time periods.
- Do not allow your child to have a television set or computer in his or her bedroom.

Eat Healthy Foods When You're Away from Home

Choose these items **MORE** often:

- lowfat milk, water
- turkey sandwich with vegetables
- small, plain hamburger with vegetables
- grilled or broiled chicken sandwich
- baked potato
- cheese pizza or pizza with vegetable toppings
- fruits and vegetables
- lowfat frozen yogurt
- lowfat or fat free salad dressings

Choose these items **LESS** often:

- soda, sweet tea, fruit drinks
- sausages, pepperoni, hot dogs, or bacon
- fried chicken or chicken nuggets
- fried fish, french fries, or fried onion rings
- biscuits, hush puppies
- olives, bacon bits
- salads made with mayonnaise
- seeds, nuts
- higher fat salad dressings
- high fat, high sugar desserts such as cake or pie

Physical Activity

Children should be physically active for 1 hour or more every day.

In general, preschoolers should not be sitting still for 1 hour or more at a time, except when sleeping.



Here are some examples of the activities children can do:

- Walking
- Riding a tricycle
- Swimming
- Playing outside at a park or playground
- Playing ball
- Dancing to music
- Running and skipping
- Jumping and hopping

Set aside time each day for the family to do some type of physical activity together.

What changes will you make in your family's eating and activity habits?

Daily Food Guide for Children Ages 2 to 5 years

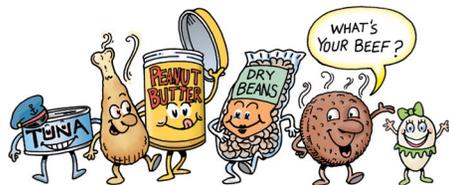
Offer your child foods from each of these food groups daily.
Amounts may vary with your child's activity and growth.

Protein Foods

Total of 2 to 4 ounces every day

1 oz equals:

- 1 oz cooked meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 cooked egg
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter*
- ¼ cup cooked beans



Dairy

Total of 2 to 2½ cups every day

1 cup equals:

- 1 cup milk or yogurt
- 1½ oz natural cheese
- 2 oz processed cheese

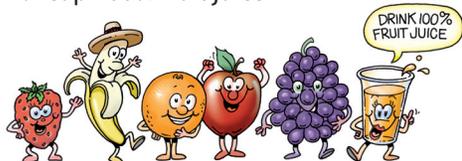


Fruits

Total of 1 to 1½ cups every day

½ cup equals:

- ½ cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit
- ¼ cup dried fruit*
- ½ cup 100% fruit juice



Limit fruit juice to 4 to 6 oz per day.

Prevent Choking

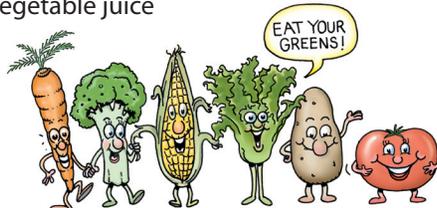
Do not give children under 4 years of age the following foods: popcorn, nuts, seeds, dried fruits, large chunks of meat or cheese, hard pieces of vegetables or fruits, hard candies, marshmallows, chips, whole grapes, and fish or meat with bones. Peanut butter should only be given to children 2 years of age and older when spread thinly on crackers or toast.

Vegetables

Total of 1 to 1½ cups every day

½ cup equals:

- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ cup chopped raw vegetables*
- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables*
- ½ cup vegetable juice



Grains

Total of 3 to 5 oz every day

1 oz equals:

- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta
- 1 cup (1 oz) dry cereal
- 5 to 6 whole grain crackers
- 1 4-inch waffle or pancake
- 1 6-inch tortilla
- ½ hamburger bun, roll, or 3-inch bagel



Oils

Total of 3 to 4 teaspoons every day

One teaspoon (5 grams) oil equals:

- 1 teaspoon liquid vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons light salad dressing
- 1 teaspoon margarine with zero trans fat



Limit solid fats like butter, regular margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these ingredients.

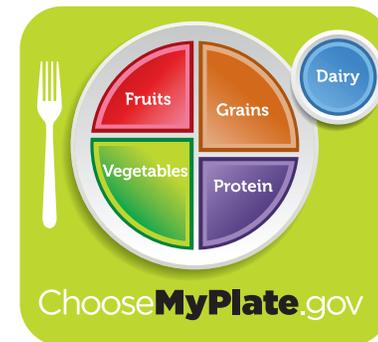
*Be careful. These foods may cause choking, especially in children under 4 years of age.

- Avoid oversized portions.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or lowfat (1%) milk.
- Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose the foods with less sodium.

Eating less salt is an important way to help your child stay healthier as they grow. The daily limit for sodium for 1 to 3 year olds is 1,000 milligrams, and for 4 to 8 year olds it is less than 1,200 milligrams.

- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Go to ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information about healthy eating, meal planning, food safety, and physical activity.



Eat Fish, Choose Wisely

Young children can eat 2 meals a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Each meal can be a portion size of 2 to 3 ounces.

Some fish low in mercury are: canned light tuna, catfish (farm-raised), pollock, salmon, scallops, shad, shrimp, tilapia, whitefish, and whiting.

Due to their mercury content, do not eat the following: Shark, King Mackerel, Swordfish, Tilefish, Orange Roughy, Blackfin Tuna, Little Tunny, and Cobia.

Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in your local lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. For more information about mercury in fish, visit: www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/healthy-weight/nutrition/seafood-consumption/index.html