

# Key Nutrients and Your Family's Health

The **Nutrition Facts** label found on packaged foods and beverages can help you **monitor nutrients you want your family to get more of and those you want to get less of**. Choosing healthier foods and beverages for your children can help reduce their risk of developing some health conditions.

**1** **Nutrients children should get more of: dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.** Many children in the U.S. do not get the recommended amount of these nutrients. More often, choose foods and beverages that are higher in these nutrients—that is, with 20% or more of the Daily Value per serving.

**2** **Nutrients to get less of: added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat.** Most children in the U.S. exceed the recommended limits for these nutrients. More often, choose foods and beverages that are lower in these nutrients—that is, with 5% or less of the Daily Value per serving.

**3** **% Daily Value (%DV) shows how much of a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet.** The %DV is the **percentage of the Daily Value** (reference amounts of nutrients to consume or not to exceed each day) for each nutrient in a serving of the food. Use the %DV to determine if a serving of the food is high or low in an individual nutrient and to compare food products (make sure the serving size is the same).

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)</b>	
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

## As a general guide:

- **5% DV** or less of a nutrient per serving is considered **low**
- **20% DV** or more of a nutrient per serving is considered **high**



American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

# Nutrients Children Should Get **More** Of

## Dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium

Children can get more of these important nutrients and all the nutrients their bodies need by eating a variety of foods from the different food groups, including vegetables, fruits, grains, protein foods, and dairy.

### Dietary Fiber

Dietary fiber is a type of carbohydrate that cannot be easily digested. Dietary fiber can speed up the movement of food and waste through the digestive system and can make you feel full and stay satisfied longer. Dietary fiber can also help lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad”) cholesterol levels in the blood and can help control the level of blood glucose (often referred to as blood sugar) by preventing rapid rises in blood glucose following a meal.

Diets higher in dietary fiber can **increase the frequency of bowel movements and can reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease** later in life.

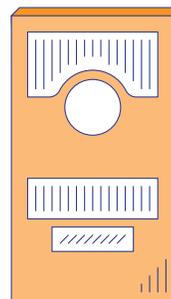
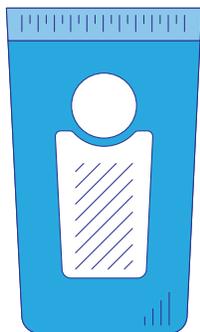
#### Food sources include:

- Whole grains (such as whole oats, brown rice, bulgur, popcorn, and quinoa) and foods made with whole grain ingredients (such as breads, cereals, crackers, and pasta)
- Beans
- Peas
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Fruits
- Vegetables

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Children should eat a variety of foods that are good sources of dietary fiber and consume at least half of their grain choices as whole grains. The Daily Value for dietary fiber is 14 grams (g) per day (based on a 1,000 calorie daily diet) for children 1 through 3 years of age and 28 grams (g) per day (based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet) for adults and children 4 years of age and older.



## Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium and is important for building strong bones and teeth, especially during childhood and adolescence. It is also important for many body processes, such as blood pressure regulation, hormone production, and immune and nervous system function. Vitamin D is found in many foods and is also produced by the body when your skin is exposed to sunlight.

Diets higher in vitamin D can **reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis** (weak and brittle bones) that can result in bone fractures later in life.

### Food sources include:

- Fish (such as herring, mackerel, salmon, trout, and tuna)
- Fish oil and cod liver oil
- Fortified dairy products (such as milk and yogurt)
- Fortified ready-to-eat cereals
- Fortified margarine
- Fortified orange juice
- Fortified plant-based beverages (such as soy, rice, and almond)
- Pork
- Mushrooms
- Eggs

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Children should eat a variety of foods that are good sources of vitamin D. The Daily Value for vitamin D is 15 micrograms (mcg) per day for children 1 through 3 years of age and 20 micrograms (mcg) per day for adults and children 4 years of age and older.

## Calcium

Calcium is a mineral and is important for building strong bones and teeth, especially during childhood and adolescence. It is also important for many body processes, such as blood clotting, hormone secretion, muscle contraction, and nervous system function.

Diets higher in calcium can **reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis** (weak and brittle bones) that can result in bone fractures later in life.

### Food sources include:

- Fortified ready-to-eat cereals
- Dairy products (such as cheese, milk, and yogurt)
- Fortified plant-based beverages (such as soy, rice, and almond)
- Tofu (made with calcium sulfate)
- Fortified orange juice
- Canned seafood with bones (such as salmon and sardines)
- Green vegetables (such as kale, broccoli, and collard greens)

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Children should eat a variety of foods that are good sources of calcium. The Daily Value for calcium is 700 milligrams (mg) per day for children 1 through 3 years of age and 1,300 milligrams (mg) per day for adults and children 4 years of age and older.

## Iron

Iron is a mineral and is important for red blood cell formation. It is also important for many body processes, such as growth and development, immune function, reproduction, and wound healing.

Diets adequate in iron can **reduce the risk of developing anemia** (a deficiency of red blood cells or of hemoglobin in the blood that can result in fatigue and weakness). Many adolescent girls are at risk of iron deficiency anemia because they have higher needs for iron.

### Food sources include:

- Organ meats (such as liver)
- Meat
- Poultry
- Whole grain, enriched, and fortified breads, cereals, pasta, and rice
- Green vegetables (such as spinach, kale, and broccoli)
- Seafood (such as tuna, sardines, haddock, shrimp, and oysters)
- Soy products (such as tofu)
- Beans
- Peas
- Eggs
- Seeds
- Nuts
- Fruits (such as raisins, prunes, dates, and peaches)

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Young children and adolescent girls should eat a variety of foods that are good sources of iron. The Daily Value for iron is 7 milligrams (mg) per day for children 1 through 3 years of age and 18 milligrams (mg) per day for adults and children 4 years of age and older.

## Potassium

Potassium is a mineral and is important for many body processes, such as heart function, muscle contraction, nervous system function, and fluid balance.

### Food sources include:

- Vegetables (such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, beet greens, and spinach)
- Juices (such as orange, pomegranate, prune, carrot and other vegetable juices)
- Tomato products (such as juice, paste, puree, and sauce)
- Beans
- Dairy products (such as milk and yogurt)
- Seafood (such as clams, halibut, mackerel, salmon, and tuna)
- Fruits (such as bananas, dried apricots, and stewed prunes)

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Children should eat a variety of foods that are good sources of potassium. The Daily Value for potassium is 3,000 milligrams (mg) per day for children 1 through 3 years of age and 4,700 milligrams (mg) per day for adults and children 4 years of age and older.

# Nutrients Children Should Get **Less** Of

## Added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat

### Added Sugars

Added sugars include sugars that are added during the processing of foods (such as sucrose or dextrose), foods packaged as sweeteners (such as table sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices. Consumption of added sugars is particularly high among children, adolescents, and young adults. Packaged foods and beverages that have a lot of added sugars (such as baked goods, desserts, sugar-sweetened beverages, and sweets) are often high in calories and don't provide other important nutrients that are needed to help children's bodies grow.

There is evidence that diets characterized, in part, by lower consumption of sugar-sweetened foods and beverages relative to less healthy dietary patterns are associated with a **reduced risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. Diets higher in all sugars can also **increase the risk of developing cavities**.

#### Food sources include:

- Sugar-sweetened beverages (such as energy drinks, flavored waters, fruit drinks, soft drinks, sports drinks, and sweetened coffee and tea)
- Baked goods (such as cakes, cookies, pastries, and pies)
- Desserts (such as ice cream, other frozen desserts, and puddings)
- Sweets (such as candies, jams, sweet toppings, and syrups)
- Salad dressings, sauces, spreads, condiments, and gravies
- Single-ingredient sugars (such as table sugar, maple syrup, or honey)

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Parents should limit calories from added sugars to less than 10% of their children's total calories per day. The Daily Value for added sugars is less than 25 grams (g) per day (based on a 1,000 calorie daily diet) for children 1 through 3 years of age and less than 50 grams (g) per day (based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet) for adults and children 4 years of age and older.

# Sodium

Sodium is a mineral and is one of the chemical elements found in salt. Sodium is an essential nutrient that the human body needs in relatively small amounts and is important for many body processes, such as fluid balance, muscle contraction, and nervous system function.

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, diets higher in sodium are associated with an **increased risk of developing high blood pressure**.

## Food sources include:

- Breads and rolls
- Pizza
- Sandwiches (such as hamburgers, hot dogs, and submarine sandwiches)
- Cold cuts and cured meats (such as deli and packaged ham and turkey)
- Soups
- Burritos and tacos
- Snack foods (such as chips, crackers, microwave popcorn, and pretzels)
- Chicken (includes processed chicken)
- Cheese (includes processed cheese)
- Egg dishes and omelets

## Nutrition Facts

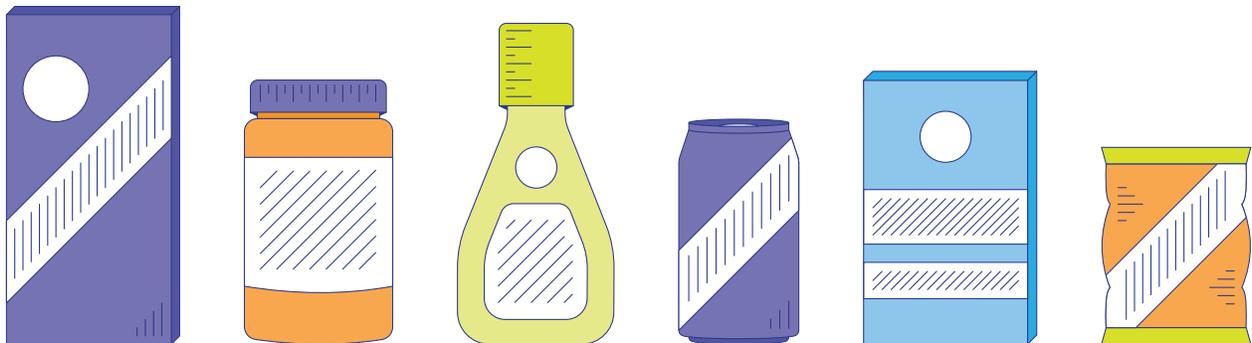
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Parents should limit sodium in their children's diet. The Daily Value for sodium is less than 1,500 milligrams (mg) per day for children 1 through 3 years of age and less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day for adults and children 4 years of age and older.



## Saturated Fat

Saturated fat is found in higher proportions in animal products and is usually solid at room temperature.

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, there is evidence that diets in which unsaturated fats (especially polyunsaturated fats) are eaten in place of saturated fat and within the recommended daily limits for calories are associated with reduced blood levels of total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad”) cholesterol—which, in turn, are associated with a **reduced risk of developing cardiovascular disease**.

### Food sources include:

- Sandwiches (such as hamburgers, hot dogs, and submarine sandwiches)
- Baked goods (such as brownies, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, pastries, and pies)
- Desserts (such as ice cream, other frozen desserts, and puddings)
- Snack foods (such as chips, crackers, microwave popcorn, and pretzels)
- Sweets (such as chocolate candies)
- Meats and poultry
- Processed meats and poultry products (such as bacon, hot dogs, jerky, some luncheon meats, and sausages)
- Dairy products (such as whole and 2% reduced-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt)
- Condiments, gravies, salad dressings
- Spreads (such as butter, stick margarine, cream cheese, and sour cream)
- Pizza
- Beef fat (tallow and suet), chicken fat, pork fat (lard), and vegetable shortening
- Tropical plant oils (such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils)

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Parents should limit calories from saturated fat to less than 10% of their children’s total calories per day and look for ways to replace saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats when possible. The Daily Value for saturated fat is less than 10 grams (g) per day (based on a 1,000 calorie daily diet) for children 1 through 3 years of age and less than 20 grams (g) per day (based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet) for adults and children 4 years of age and older.

### Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated Fats

- Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are found in higher proportions in plants and seafood and are usually liquid at room temperature as oils.
- Food sources include vegetable oils (such as corn, olive, and sunflower oils), avocados, nuts, seeds, fish (such as salmon, trout, and tuna), mayonnaise and oil-based salad dressings, and soft margarine (liquid, spray, and tub).
- Monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat are not mandatory on the Nutrition Facts label.

Learn more about the Nutrition Facts label at: [www.FDA.gov/NewNutritionFactsLabel](http://www.FDA.gov/NewNutritionFactsLabel)