



# keeping a healthy balance in children



This pamphlet contains general guidelines about healthy eating, physical activity, and positive parenting for children ages 2 years and older. Talk with the nutritionist, nurse, or health care provider for more information.

INSIDE—A poster to hang on your wall or refrigerator!



## healthy eating

### To help children develop healthy eating habits:

- Encourage children to enjoy and learn about a variety of foods. All foods can fit into a healthy eating plan.
- At meals, try to fill about half of the plate with fruits and vegetables.
- Plan meals and snacks for about the same time each day.
- Use measuring cups and measuring spoons for awhile until you can visualize a specific portion size of a food or beverage.
- Drink water when thirsty. Limit sodas and sweet drinks.
- Involve children in food shopping and meal preparation.
- For meals and snacks, buy foods low in sugar, sodium (salt), and fat.
- Serve smaller portions. Let your child ask for seconds.
- Let children stop eating when they are full, instead of when the plate is empty.
- Try to have children eat slowly. A child is better able to feel fullness when eating slowly.
- Eat meals together as a family as often as possible and make these mealtimes pleasant.
- Turn off the television during mealtime.

Children should get 1 hour or more of physical activity per day. Toddlers and preschoolers should not sit still for 1 hour or more at a time, except when sleeping. Plan times and places for your family to engage in activities such as those listed below:

- Walking.
- Playing at the park or playground.
- Swimming.
- Riding a tricycle or bicycle.
- Dancing to music.
- Rollerskating or rollerblading.
- Playing games such as soccer, kickball, basketball, and tennis.
- Playing games that include running, skipping, hopping, jumping, or marching. These can be outdoor games or games that can be played indoors.
- Joining in household tasks such as cleaning and yardwork.
- Limit television and video games to 1 hour or less per day!

## physical activity

Slowly try to improve the whole family's eating and physical activity habits.





# make healthy food choices

- Choose foods every day from each of the food groups.
- The amount of food consumed daily may vary with your child's activity and growth. The goal is for your child to stay at a healthy weight or to "grow into" a healthy weight.
- Children 2 to 3 years old should generally eat the lower number of ounces or cups per day from each food group. Older children may need the higher amounts.
- Foods lower in fat and sugar are in the "Choose MORE Often" column below.

Food Group	HOW MUCH	CHOOSE MORE OFTEN	CHOOSE LESS OFTEN
<b>Protein Foods Group</b> This group includes lean meat, chicken, turkey, fish, or cooked dried beans. 	<b>HOW MUCH</b> Ages 2 to 8 years: 2 to 4 ounces per day Ages 9 years and older: 5 to 6 ounces per day <b>1 ounce of protein foods equals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 ounce cooked meat, chicken, turkey, or fish</li> <li>1 egg</li> <li>¼ cup cooked dry beans or tofu</li> <li>¼ ounce nuts or seeds*</li> <li>1 tablespoon peanut butter**</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE MORE OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lean cuts of meat with fat trimmed off such as round, sirloin, chuck, loin</li> <li>chicken and turkey without the skin</li> <li>baked or broiled fish</li> <li>cooked dry beans or peas</li> <li>low fat hot dogs*, low fat sausage*</li> <li>low fat luncheon meat such as turkey, lean ham, or lean roast beef</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE LESS OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fatty cuts of meat such as regular ground beef, short ribs, spare ribs</li> <li>fried chicken</li> <li>fried fish</li> <li>regular hot dogs*</li> <li>lunch meat such as bologna, salami</li> <li>ham hocks, oxtail, neckbones</li> <li>sausage, bacon, pepperoni</li> <li>peanut butter**</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy Group</b> This group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and foods made from milk. Switch to fat free or 1% lowfat milk. 	<b>HOW MUCH</b> Ages 2 to 8 years: 2 to 2½ cups per day Ages 9 years and older: 3 cups per day <b>1 cup of dairy equals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup milk</li> <li>1 cup yogurt</li> <li>1½ ounces natural cheese</li> <li>2 ounces processed cheese</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE MORE OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fat free or 1% lowfat milk</li> <li>fat free or lowfat plain yogurt</li> <li>reduced fat, lowfat, fat free cheese</li> <li>cottage cheese with 0 to 1% fat</li> <li>fat free or lowfat frozen yogurt</li> <li>fat free or lowfat ice cream</li> <li>ice milk</li> <li>pudding made with fat free or 1% lowfat milk</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE LESS OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whole or 2% reduced fat milk</li> <li>yogurt made with whole milk</li> <li>regular cheese</li> <li>cottage cheese with 2% or more fat</li> <li>regular ice cream or frozen yogurt</li> <li>pudding made with whole or 2% reduced fat milk</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits Group</b> Most of your choices should be fruit, not juice. 	<b>HOW MUCH</b> Ages 2 to 8 years: 1 to 1½ cups per day Ages 9 years and older: 1½ to 2 cups per day <b>1 cup of fruit equals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit</li> <li>1 cup fruit juice</li> <li>½ cup dried fruit*</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE MORE OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fresh fruit, canned, or frozen fruit packed in natural juices or rinsed if packed in heavy syrup</li> <li>100% fruit juice                Ages 6 years and under: Limit fruit juice to 4 to 6 oz per day.                Ages 7 years and older: Limit fruit juice to 8 to 12 oz per day.</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE LESS OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fruit with added sauces</li> <li>fruit packed in heavy syrups</li> <li>avocado</li> <li>coconut*</li> <li>frozen fruit juice bars</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables Group</b> Try to have a variety of vegetables each day. 	<b>HOW MUCH</b> Ages 2 to 8 years: 1 to 1½ cups per day Ages 9 years and older: 2 to 3 cups per day <b>1 cup of vegetables equals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 cup cooked or chopped raw* vegetables</li> <li>1 cup vegetable juice</li> <li>2 cups leafy salad greens*</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE MORE OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raw vegetables*</li> <li>canned or frozen vegetables without added sauces</li> <li>baked or boiled potatoes</li> <li>vegetable juice</li> <li>salads* prepared with fat free or light dressings</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE LESS OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vegetables made with butter, fat back, cream, or cheese sauces</li> <li>fried vegetables, French fries</li> <li>hash browns, potato puffs</li> <li>potato chips*</li> <li>cole slaw* or potato salad made with regular mayonnaise</li> </ul>
<b>Grains Group</b> This group includes bread, cereal, rice, pasta and foods made from grain products. Make at least half of your grains <b>WHOLE</b> grains. 	<b>HOW MUCH</b> Ages 2 to 8 years: 3 to 5 ounces per day Ages 9 years and older: 5 to 8 ounces per day <b>1 ounce of grains equals:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 slice bread</li> <li>½ cup cooked cereal, rice, pasta, or grits</li> <li>1 cup ready-to-eat cereal</li> <li>1 small bran muffin</li> <li>5-6 whole grain crackers</li> <li>1 4-inch waffle or pancake</li> <li>1 6-inch tortilla</li> <li>½ hamburger bun or roll</li> <li>½ English muffin</li> <li>½ of a 3-inch bagel</li> <li>3 cups low fat popcorn*</li> <li>10 small pretzels*</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE MORE OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whole grain bread, rolls, bagels, English muffins, pita bread</li> <li>whole grain cereals that are low in fat and sugar</li> <li>cooked cereal, grits</li> <li>whole grain pasta</li> <li>brown rice</li> <li>low fat, whole grain waffles or pancakes</li> <li>soft tortilla (corn or flour)</li> <li>soda crackers, animal crackers, graham crackers</li> <li>whole grain crackers</li> <li>baked snack chips*</li> <li>pretzels*</li> <li>low fat popcorn*</li> </ul>	<b>CHOOSE LESS OFTEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cereal high in fat/sugar and low in fiber</li> <li>pasta or rice prepared with cream, butter, or cheese sauces</li> <li>high fat crackers</li> <li>pastries, muffins, biscuits</li> <li>sweet rolls, doughnuts, croissants</li> <li>fried tacos*</li> <li>fried tortillas*</li> <li>regular snack chips*</li> <li>cheese puffs*</li> <li>cakes, cookies, pies</li> </ul>

\*\*Peanut butter should not be given to children under 2 years of age because of the risk of choking. When peanut butter is given to children 2 years of age or older, it should be the creamy type and it should be spread very thinly on toast or crackers. Never give spoonfuls of peanut butter.

## Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing food.

Examples of solid fats and oils:

### SOLID FATS

Beef, pork, and chicken fat  
 Butter, cream, and milk fat  
 Coconut, palm, and palm kernels oil  
 Hydrogenated oil  
 Partially hydrogenated oil  
 Shortening  
 Stick margarine

### OILS

Canola oil  
 Corn oil  
 Cottonseed oil  
 Olive oil  
 Peanut oil  
 Safflower oil  
 Sunflower oil  
 Tub (soft) margarine  
 Vegetable oil

## Sample Daily Meal Plan Note: Children ages 2 to 3 years may need smaller portion sizes.

### BREAKFAST

¾ cup 100% fruit juice  
 1 ounce whole grain cereal  
 ½ cup 1% lowfat or fat free milk

### MORNING SNACK

5 whole grain crackers  
 1 tablespoon peanut butter\*\*  
 (spread thinly on crackers)  
 water

### LUNCH

½ cup cooked beans  
 ½ cup cooked rice  
 ½ cup vegetables  
 ½ cup fruit  
 1 cup 1% lowfat or fat free milk

### MID-AFTERNOON SNACK

½ cup chopped raw vegetables\*  
 1 tablespoon light salad dressing  
 10 pretzels\*  
 water

### DINNER

2½ ounces cooked meat  
 1 small potato  
 2 teaspoons margarine  
 (with zero trans fat)  
 ½ cup vegetables  
 1 small piece of cornbread  
 1 cup 1% lowfat or fat free milk

### EVENING SNACK

½ cup fruit  
 ½ cup low fat yogurt  
 water

\*Be careful. These foods may cause choking, especially in children ages 3 years and younger.



# positive parenting

Children need to be loved, supported, accepted, and encouraged by their parents, family members, and friends. Children are more likely to feel good about themselves when they feel loved by their parents.

## Positive parenting tips:

- Spend time reading, singing, and playing with your children every day.
- Listen to your children.
- Encourage your children every day. Be positive and tell your children what they are doing well.
- Tell your children you love them as a person, although there may be a behavior you dislike.
- Comfort and reward your children by doing a special activity. Rewards could be: a trip to the beach, park, or library; reading books; and playing games together. Do not use food as a reward.
- Remember, each child is an individual who is special and unique.
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep each night.

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

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## What changes will you make in your family's physical activities?

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### Florida Department of Health, WIC Program

For information about WIC, call 1-800-342-3556 or visit [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org).

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