

What's to Eat?

Healthy Foods for Hungry Children

Is your refrigerator stocked with healthy foods? Are any of your children picky eaters? Do you eat out often? Did you know that young children can choke on certain foods?

Read on for information from the American Academy of Pediatrics on creative ways to serve up breakfast and lunch, tips for picky eaters, and how to make healthy fast-food choices. Also, read some tips about food safety, choking hazards, food allergies, and microwave safety. If you have specific questions about your child's nutrition, talk with your child's doctor or a registered dietitian.

Off to a Good Start...Breakfast

Breakfast gives children energy to carry through an active morning. Children who skip breakfast may not concentrate well at school or may lack energy to play. They also tend to eat unhealthy foods as snacks later.

Cereal with low-fat (1%) milk is a favorite, but sweetened cereal can have a lot of added sugar. Check the Nutrition Facts label before buying. Although the percent daily values on food labels are based on calorie levels for adults, they can still be used to select more nutrient-rich cereals (and other foods). Choose cereals with less than 10 to 12 grams of sugar and at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. If your child prefers a sweet taste, jazz up unsweetened cereal with sliced peaches or bananas, strawberries, or blueberries.

For children who don't like traditional breakfast foods like cereal, eggs, or toast, here are some options:

- **Breakfast shake:** Combine milk, fruit, and ice in a blender. (See Milk Choices.)
- Frozen banana: Dip a banana in yogurt; then roll it in crushed cereal. Freeze.
- Leftovers: Serve whole-wheat spaghetti or chicken hot or cold.
- **Peanut butter snack:** Spread peanut butter on whole-wheat crackers, a tortilla, apple slices, or jicama slices. (See Safety Check.)

Fun Lunches

Children who help make their own lunches are more likely to eat them. Here are ideas to make lunches fun!

- Use cookie cutters to cut sandwiches into fun, interesting shapes.
- · Decorate lunch bags with colorful stickers.
- Put a new twist on a sandwich favorite. Top peanut butter with raisins, bananas, or apple slices.
- For color and crunch, use a variety of veggies as sandwich toppers: cucumber slices, grated carrots, or zucchini.

Picky Eaters

Even the most nutritious meal won't do any good if a child won't eat it. Some children are picky eaters. Others eat only certain foods—or refuse food—as a way to assert themselves. Try these ideas to make your family meals pleasant.

- Set a good example by eating well yourself. Ideally, eat at least one meal together as a family every day or try for 3 to 4 times per week.
- If your child refuses one food from a food group, try another from the same group the next time you prepare a meal.
- Try deep-yellow or orange vegetables instead of green vegetables.
- Try chicken, turkey, fish, or pork instead of lean beef.
- Try low-fat flavored milk, cheese, or yogurt instead of low-fat milk.
- Boost the nutritional value of prepared dishes with extra ingredients. Mix grated zucchini and carrots into quick breads, muffins, meatloaf, lasagna, and soups.
- Serve a food your child enjoys along with a food he or she has refused to eat in the past.
- Try serving a food again if it was refused before. It may take many tries before a child likes it.
- Invite children to help with food preparation. It can make eating food more fun.
- Add eye appeal for fun. Cut foods into interesting shapes. Create a smiling face on top of a casserole with cheese, vegetables, or fruit strips.

Keep in mind, the amount of food and number of servings children need daily from each food group depends on their age and how active they are. Some parents worry because young children seem to eat small amounts of food, especially when compared with adult portions.

Don't worry about how little a child eats. A child who is growing well is getting enough to eat. If you are concerned, talk with your child's doctor.

Food for Fast Times

Hungry and in a hurry? When it comes to food, families want convenience. It's no surprise that fast-food restaurants are so popular. However, many fast foods have a lot of fat, calories, and salt. Children and adults can eat these foods every once in a while if other food choices are sensible. Here are tips on how to make healthier fast-food choices.

Milk Choices

Here are guidelines about what type of milk to give your child.

- Children younger than 12 months—Human (breast) milk is best. Give iron-fortified formula if breast milk is not available.
- **Children 12 to 24 months**—Whole milk. Your child's doctor may recommend reduced-fat (2%) or low-fat (1%) milk if your child is obese or overweight, or if there is a family history of high cholesterol or heart disease. Check with your child's doctor or a registered dietitian before switching from whole to reduced-fat milk. (Breastfeeding can continue after 12 months of age as long as is desired by mom and baby.)

· Children older than 24 months—Low-fat or nonfat (skim) milk.

At fast-food restaurants

- Share. Split an order of fries with other family members.
- Choose a food from each food group. Most fast-food places offer a variety of lower-fat choices, including the salad bar (low-fat dressing), plain baked potatoes (top with veggies or salsa), chili, lowfat milk or frozen yogurt, English muffins, or grilled (non-fried) chicken sandwiches.
- **Substitute.** Drink water, low-fat milk, or 100% unsweetened fruit juice instead of soft drinks. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that juice be limited to 4 ounces per day for children 1 to 3 years of age, 4 to 6 ounces per day for children 4 to 6 years of age, and 8 ounces per day for children 7 to 18 years of age. If dessert is included with a meal, ask if fruit is available instead of a dessert.
- **Balance high-fat with low-fat choices.** Order a small hamburger and the salad bar. Kids often like many foods available on a salad bar like fresh fruit, carrot sticks, and broccoli florets.

At the supermarket

- **Plan ahead.** It takes less than a minute to fix a sandwich with reduced-fat meat and cheese if you have the ingredients. Check the Nutrition Facts label on packaged meats because many deli meats, such as salami and bologna, are high in fat.
- **Shop for healthier meals.** For grab-and-go meals, try ready-made deli sandwiches (made with reduced-fat deli meats) or roasted chicken served with fresh fruits and vegetables from the salad bar.
- **Shop for healthier snacks.** Fruits, vegetables, whole-wheat pretzels, baked tortilla chips, and baked potato chips are low-fat alternatives, but watch salt content.

Safety Check

Food safety

Remember 2 important rules to prevent foodborne illness.

- 1. Everyone should wash his or her hands well before and after meals.
- 2. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. When there's no refrigerator to store a bag lunch, here are ways to keep food safe.
 - Tuck an ice or freezer pack into the lunch bag. Or use an insulated container, such as a thermos, to keep hot foods hot.
 - Add a bottle of frozen water or a box of frozen 100% unsweetened fruit juice.
 - Freeze the sandwich bread and filling—or other freezable foods— the night before.

Choking hazards

Keep dangerous foods from children until 4 years or older depending on each child's development and maturity. However, round, firm food, such as hot dogs or grapes, can be served if completely chopped into tiny pieces. Peanut butter and other nut butters should be spread thinly. Choking hazards include hot dogs; hard, gooey, or sticky candy; chewing gum; nuts and seeds; whole grapes; raw vegetables, such as

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carrot sticks; raw fruit chunks, such as apples; popcorn; chunks of peanut butter or other nut butters; marshmallows; meat sticks/sausages; chunks of meat; and chunks of cheese or string cheese.

Food allergies

If your child has food allergies or is diagnosed with peanut or tree nut allergies, avoid nuts and any food that contains or is made with nut products. Read food labels carefully. Also, whenever your child is away from you, whether it is at school, a child care center, or camp, there must be a plan to avoid problem foods, recognize and treat a reaction, and get medical care. Meet with staff early to set up an action plan.

Microwave safely

A microwave can help you cook in a healthful way. Vegetables cooked in a microwave stay nutrient rich. Meat, fish, and poultry dishes can be cooked or reheated with little or no added fat.

Microwaving also can help you cook faster and easier. But it can pose potential hazards—especially when children cook with the microwave. Burns are the most common microwave injury. Children can be burned by

- Removing dishes from the microwave—make sure they use a pot holder.
- Spilling hot foods—keep the oven out of a young child's reach.
- Opening microwave popcorn packages and other containers—show older children how to open the container so steam escapes away from their hands and face.
- Eating food that is cooked unevenly or has hot spots—show older children how to stir food well before tasting it, or let food rest so that heat distributes evenly.
- Remember to only use containers labeled for use in the microwave.

Safety tip: If children are too young to read or follow written directions, they are too young to use a microwave without supervision.

Don't Forget Active Play!

Physical activity, along with proper nutrition, promotes lifelong health. Active play is the best exercise for kids! Parents can join their children and have fun while being active too. Some fun activities for parents and kids to do together include playing on swings, riding tricycles or bicycles, jumping rope, flying a kite, making a snowman, swimming, or dancing. The daily recommendation for exercise for children (adults also) is at least 1 hour per day. This takes commitment from parents, but the rewards are time together and better health.

For More Information

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.AAP.org and www.HealthyChildren.org

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

www.eatright.org and www.kidseatright.org

US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

www.fns.usda.gov (includes information on SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] and WIC [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children] benefits)

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Bike Safety Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe when biking.

There are so many great reasons to ride your bike: It offers fun, freedom and exercise, and it's good for the environment. Here are a few tips so that you will be as safe as possible while you're doing it.

Wear a Helmet

 We have a simple saying: "Use your head, wear a helmet." It is the single most effective safety device available to reduce head injury and death from bicycle crashes.



Find the Right Helmet Fit

- Make sure your child has the right size helmet and wears it every time when riding, skating or scooting. Your children's helmet should meet the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's standards. When it's time to purchase a new helmet, let your children pick out their own; they'll be more likely to wear them for every ride.
 - More children ages 5 to 14 are seen in emergency rooms for injuries related to biking than any other sport. Helmets can reduce the risk of severe brain injuries by 88 percent – yet only 45 percent of children 14 and under usually wear a bike helmet.



- <u>Make sure the helmet fits and your child knows</u> <u>how to put it on correctly.</u> A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled, but not too tightly. Safe Kids recommends kids take the <u>Helmet Fit Test</u>.
- EYES check: Position the helmet on your head. Look up and you should see the bottom rim of the helmet. The rim should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.



• EARS check: Make sure the straps of the helmet form a "V" under your ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.

MOUTH check: Open your mouth as wide as you can. Do you feel the helmet hug your head? If not, tighten those straps and make sure the buckle is flat against your skin.







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Use Appropriate Helmets for Different Activities

- Children should always wear a helmet for all wheeled sports activities.
- A properly-fitted bike helmet is just as effective when riding a scooter, roller skating or in-line skating.
- When skateboarding and long boarding, make sure your child wears a skateboarding helmet.
- Proper Equipment and Maintenance Are Important
- Ensure proper bike fit by bringing the child along when shopping for a bike. Select one that is the right size for the child, not one he or she will grow into.
- When children are sitting on the seat of the bicycle, their feet should be able to touch the ground.
- Before the ride, make sure the reflectors are secure, brakes work properly, gears shift smoothly, and tires are tightly secured and properly inflated.
- Long or loose clothing can get caught in bike chains or wheel spokes. Dress young kids appropriately to ensure a safe ride.

Keep an Eye Out

- Actively supervise children until you're comfortable that they are responsible to ride on their own.
- Every child is different, but developmentally, it can be hard for kids to judge speed and distance of cars until age 10, so limit riding to sidewalks (although be careful for vehicles in driveways), parks or bike paths until age 10. No matter where you ride, teach your child to stay alert and watch for cars and trucks.
- Children should be able to demonstrate riding competence and knowledge of the rules of the road before cycling with traffic.

Model and Teach Good Behavior

 You'd be surprised how much kids learn from watching you, so it's extra important for parents to model proper behavior. Wear a helmet, even if you didn't when you were a kid.



- Teach your kids to make eye contact with drivers. Bikers should make sure drivers are paying attention and are going to stop before they cross the street.
- Tell your kids to ride on the right side of the road, with traffic, not against it. Stay as far to the right as possible. Use appropriate hand signals and respect traffic signals, stopping at all stop signs and stoplights.
- Stop and look left, right and left again before entering a street or crossing an intersection. Look back and yield to traffic coming from behind before turning left.

Be Bright, Use Lights

 When riding at dusk, dawn or in the evening, be bright and use lights

 and make sure your
 bike has reflectors as
 well. It's also smart
 to wear clothes and
 accessories that have



retro-reflective materials to improve biker visibility to motorists.

• Most states require a front light but allow the use of a rear reflector. Headlights aren't so much for bicyclists to see where they are going but for others to see them. Riding without a headlight means drivers won't see you, and surprising motorists is never a good idea.





Playground Safety Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe at the playground.

With active supervision and some basic safety tips, every day at the playground can be a walk in the park.

Supervise Kids Using Playground Equipment

 Actively supervise children on playgrounds. It won't be hard – they'll probably be calling for you to watch them climb, jump and swing.



- Check playgrounds where your children play. Look for age-appropriate equipment and hazards, such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. Report any hazards to the school or appropriate local office.
- Teach children that pushing, shoving or crowding while on the playground can be dangerous.
- Dress appropriately for the playground. Remove necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings that can get caught on equipment and pose a strangulation hazard. Even helmets can be dangerous on a playground, so save those for bikes.
- Little kids can play differently than big kids. It is important to have a separate play area for children under 5.

Falls are the most common type of playground injury, accounting for more than 75 percent of all playground-related injuries. Lack of or improper supervision is associated with approximately 45 percent of playground-related injuries.



Choose the Right Play Area Based on Your Child's Age

- Ensure that children use age-appropriate playground equipment. Separate play areas for bigger kids and children under 5 should be available and maintained.
- For babies who are mostly crawling or at best learning to walk, the play area should have a smooth and easy surface to walk on.
- If your baby has fairly good head control and can sit up with support (usually around 9 months old), give the baby (bucket-shaped) swings a try.

Ensure Safe Surfacing Beneath and Surrounding Playground Equipment

- Avoid playgrounds with non-impact absorbing surfaces, such as asphalt, concrete, grass, dirt or gravel.
- Recommended surface materials include: sand, pea gravel, wood chips, mulch and shredded rubber. Rubber mats, synthetic turf and other artificial materials are also safe surfaces and require less maintenance.
- Surfacing should be at least 12 inches deep and extend at least 6 feet in all directions around stationary equipment. Depending on the height of the equipment, surfacing may need to extend farther than 6 feet.
- For swings, make sure that the surfacing extends, in the back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar. So if the top of the swing set is 10 feet high, the surfacing should extend 20 feet.



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Check That Playgrounds Are Inspected and Maintained by Qualified Personnel

- Double check with your school and child care center to make sure they have age-appropriate, well-maintained playground equipment.
- If there are any hazards in a public or backyard playground, report them immediately and do not allow children to use the equipment until it is safe.
- Report any playground safety hazards to the organization responsible for the site (e.g., school, park authority or city council).





Encourage Your Child to Be Physically Active

Many powerful benefits come from regular physical activity. Here is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics to help families live healthy, active lives.

Getting the Entire Family Moving

Because participation in all types of physical activity is declining dramatically as a child's age and grade in school increase, it is important that physical activity be a regular part of family life.

Studies have shown that lifestyles learned in childhood are much likelier to stay with a person into adulthood. If sports and physical activities are a family priority, they will provide children and parents with a strong foundation for a lifetime of health.

For optimal health and well-being, children and adolescents aged 6 and older need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, as well as at least a few days per week of bone- and muscle-strengthening exercises. Children younger than 6 years need 3 hours of activity every day.

The Benefits of Physical Activity

Being physically active requires moving enough to breathe heavily, be short of breath, feel warm, and sweat. Exercise is vital to the health and well-being of children, by providing many physical, mental, and behavioral health benefits.

The benefits of physical activity include

Benefits to the Body

- $\boldsymbol{\cdot}$ Builds and maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- Controls weight and body fat
- Improves appearance
- · Increases muscle strength, endurance, and flexibility
- Improves ability to fall asleep quickly and sleep well
- Reduces the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease later in life
- Builds and improves athletic skills

Benefits to the Mind

- Increases enthusiasm and optimism
- · Fosters teamwork and friendship when it's an organized sport
- Boosts self-esteem
- Reduces anxiety, tension, and depression
- Improves school performance, attention, and behavior

Getting Started

Parents can play a key role in helping their child become more physically active.

Here are 11 ways to get started.

1. Talk with your child's doctor. Your child's doctor can help your child understand why physical activity is important. Your child's doctor can also help you and your child identify a sport or activity that is best for your child.

- 2. Find a fun activity. Help your child find a sport that she enjoys. The more she enjoys the activity, the more likely she will be to continue it. Get the entire family involved. It is a great way to spend time together.
- **3.** Choose an activity that is developmentally appropriate. For example, a 7- or 8-year-old child may not be ready for weight lifting or a 3-mile run, but soccer, bicycle riding, and swimming are all appropriate activities.
- 4. Plan ahead. Make sure your child has a convenient time and place to exercise.
- 5. Provide a safe environment. Make sure your child's equipment and chosen site for the sport or activity are safe. Make sure your child's clothing is comfortable and appropriate.
- 6. Provide active toys. Young children especially need easy access to balls, jump ropes, and other active toys.
- 7. Be a role model. Child ren who regularly see their parents enjoying sports and physical activity are likelier to do so themselves.
- 8. Play with your child. Help her learn a new sport or another physical activity. Or just have fun together by going for a walk, hike, or bike ride.
- **9. Set limits.** Limit screen time, including time spent on TV, videos, computers, and video games, each day. Use the free time for more physical activities.
- **10. Make time for exercise.** Some children are so overscheduled with homework, music lessons, and other planned activities that they do not have time for exercise.
- **11.** Do not overdo activity. When your child is ready to start, remember to tell her to listen to her body. Exercise and physical activity should not hurt. If pain occurs, your child should slow down or try a less vigorous activity. As with any activity, it is important not to overdo it. If exercise starts to interfere with school or other activities, talk with your child's doctor.

Healthy, Active Living

During well-child visits (also known as health supervision visits), your child's doctor will ask you questions related to nutrition, fitness, and media habits. Remember that health is not about a specific weight, shape, or size. All children, regardless of their weight, shape, or size, are encouraged to live healthy, active lives.

To lead a healthy, active life, families can strive to reach the following goals:

- Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Create a Family Media Use Plan at www.HealthyChildren.org/ MediaUsePlan to help balance online and off-line activities.
- Get 1 hour or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.
- Avoid sugary drinks.

Remember

Exercise along with a balanced diet provides the foundation for a healthy, active life. One of the most important things parents can do is encourage healthy habits in their children early in life. It is not too late to start. Ask your child's doctor about tools for healthy living today.

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics www.aap.org and www.HealthyChildren.org

Action for Healthy Kids

www.actionforhealthykids.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Physical Activity" Information

www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity

We Can! Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan

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NUTRITION GUIDE



AGES 4-5

The following are guidelines for a 4 to 5 year old child. A child's calorie needs vary depending on activity level and appetite. For more specific nutrition information, talk with your physician or IHA Nutrition Specialist.



DAIRY Amount per day: 4 SERVINGS

One serving looks like:

³/₄ cup low fat or fat-free milk

1/2 cup low fat yogurt

³⁄₄ cup calcium fortified non-dairy milk

 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz cheese



GRAINS Amount per day: 6 SERVINGS

One serving looks like: ½ cup dry cereal

or ¹/₂ cup cooked cereal

I slice bread

1/2 of an English muffin or mini bagel

⅓ to ½ cup cup rice, pasta, potatoes

2 to 4 whole grain crackers



PROTEIN/ MEAT Amount per day: 2 SERVINGS (equivalent of 2 ounces)

> One serving looks like: I oz cooked

meat, poultry or fish

2 oz tofu or vegetarian burger

1/4 cup cottage cheese

l egg

I-2 Tbs peanut butter

 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup nuts or I $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbs seeds

1/4 cup cooked beans



FRUIT Amount per day: 2-3 SERVINGS

One serving looks like: I small piece

fresh fruit

3 Tbs dried fruit

¼ to ½ cup canned fruit or fruit cup, packed in water or juice

 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice (limit to once per day)

 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup berries



VEGETABLES Amount per day: 2-3 SERVINGS

One serving looks like:

1/4 to 1/2 cup cooked or canned vegetables

> 1/4 to 1/2 cup raw or leafy vegetables

1/2 cup low sodium vegetable juice





FATS Amount per day: 3 SERVINGS

> One serving looks like:

l tsp oil, margarine or butter (trans fat free)

> 2 tsp salad dressing

1/8 avocado

SAMPLE MEAL PLANS

These meal plans are designed as a guide for you in planning well-balanced meals. Well-balanced, nutritious meals include complex carbohydrates, lean protein, fruits, vegetables & healthy fats. Children this age should have two to three snacks between meals. See snack sheet for suggestions.

BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
1 Whole grain bagel or English muffin (hockey puck size) I Tbs light cream cheese 1 √2 cup berries 1 √2 cup milk	 ³/₄ to I cup chili with lean meat & beans or all beans ¹/₄ cup shredded cheddar cheese ¹/₂ of small piece of fruit 6 whole grain crackers Water 	4 baked chicken breast strips (2 oz) 1/2 cup baked potato fries 1/2 cup steamed green beans 1 tsp margarine or butter 1/2 cup milk Water
½ cup cereal (4 grams of fiber or more per serving) ½ medium banana ½ cup milk	Chicken wrap (spread a whole wheat fajita size tortilla with 2 Tbs salsa then add ¼ cup cheddar cheese and ½ cup shredded chicken breast, then roll) ½ cup raw vegetables with low fat ranch dressing Water	2 oz hamburger/veggie burger on I whole wheat hamburger bun ½ corn on the cob with I tsp butter or margarine ½ cup milk ½ cup canned, unsweetened fruit
I slice whole wheat toast I Tbs peanut butter ½ cup yogurt ½ cup berries water	Tuna sandwich with I slice whole wheat bread, ¼ cup tuna mixed with mayonnaise, lettuce I container canned fruit (½ cup), in its own juice ½ cup milk	2 oz grilled fish ½ cup rice pilaf I cup mixed raw vegetables with I Tbs light ranch dressing 8 grapes ½ cup milk
½ cup oatmeal ½ cup peaches ½ cup milk	I Tbs peanut butter on I slice whole wheat bread ½ small apple, sliced ½ cup milk ½ cup low fat pudding	I cup macaroni and cheese made with skim milk and I Tbs margarine or butter ½ cup grilled zucchini ½ cup strawberries Water
I egg scrambled I slice of whole wheat toast with I tsp margarine or butter ½ cup milk	1 № whole wheat English muffin 3 slices turkey pepperoni 1 № cup mozzarella cheese 2 Tbs pizza sauce I orange Water	 ½ cup spaghetti with sauce 2 small meatballs/veggie meatballs ½ cup steamed broccoli and carrots Yogurt parfait (½ cup vanilla yogurt with ½ cup berries) Water