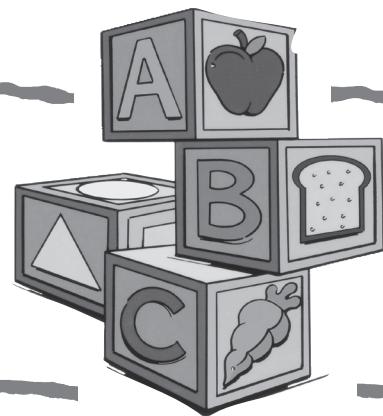


# Right From The Start



As a parent, you are interested in your child's health. Your role is to provide healthy food in appropriate portions, and your child's role is to decide how much to eat. That is why it is important to understand how to provide healthy choices for your child.

Read on for information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about making healthful choices. If you have specific questions about your child's nutrition, talk with your child's doctor or a registered dietitian.

## For Starters

Child-sized portions help children accept new foods. Two tips for parents include 1) Serve one-fourth to one-third of the adult portion size, or 1 measuring tablespoon of each food for each year of your child's age; and 2) Give less than you think your child will eat. Let your child ask for more if she is still hungry.

## How do I know when my child is eating enough?

Children eat when they are hungry and usually stop when they are full. Some parents worry because young children appear to eat very small amounts of food, especially when compared with adult portions. To check your child's eating pattern, pay attention to his food choices.

- Offer all food groups at every meal. Make sure no one food group is completely left out. If this happens for a few days, don't worry. However, missing out on a food group for a long time could keep your child from getting enough nutrients.
- Encourage your child to eat a variety of foods within the food groups by modeling good eating yourself. Even within a food group, different foods provide different nutrients.
- A child who is growing well is getting enough to eat.

## Building a healthy plate

Over the years, various tools have been created to provide guidance on the type and amount of food Americans should eat. MyPlate (the new healthy eating food icon that replaced MyPyramid) recommends the following:

- **Balancing calories.** Enjoy your food, but eat less. Avoid oversized portions.
- **Foods to increase.** Make half your plate fruits and vegetables. Switch to nonfat or low-fat milk (see "Milk—whole or reduced fat?").
- **Foods to reduce.** Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose the foods with lower numbers. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

## Food groups

There is a variety of foods from each food group (see page 2 for a sample list of food choices). The next time you go grocery shopping, try something new.

*NOTE: Do not feed children younger than 4 years round, firm food unless it is chopped completely. The following foods are choking hazards: nuts and*

*seeds; chunks of meat or cheese; hot dogs; whole grapes; fruit chunks (such as apples); popcorn; raw vegetables; hard, gooey, or sticky candy; and chewing gum. Peanut butter can be a choking hazard for children younger than 2.*

*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.*

## Snacks count too

Snacks make up an important part of childhood nutrition and are an opportunity to encourage healthy eating. Children must eat frequently. With their small stomachs, they cannot eat enough at meals alone for their high-energy needs. Three meals and 2 or 3 healthy snacks a day help children to meet their daily nutrition needs.

To make the most of snacks, parents and caregivers should offer healthy snack choices and be consistent with the time snacks are served. Schedule snacks around normal daily events, and space them at least 2 hours before meals. Children should not feel full all the time. A feeling of hunger between meals and snacks encourages children to eat well when healthy foods are offered.

## Milk—whole or reduced-fat?

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

Age	Type of milk
Younger than 12 months	Breast milk is best; iron-fortified formula should be used if breast milk is not available.
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. Note: Breastfeeding can continue after 12 months of age as long as is desired by mom and baby.
Older than 24 months	Low-fat (1%) or nonfat (skim) milk

## Active play is important too!

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.

Food group	Types of foods
<p><b>Grains</b></p> <p>Foods from grains are packed with starches (complex carbohydrates). Carbohydrates are the best source of energy for active, growing bodies.</p>	<p><b>Whole grains:</b> brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain barley, whole-grain cornmeal, whole rye, whole wheat bread, whole wheat cereal flakes, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, wild rice</p> <p><b>Other products:</b> mostly made from refined grains; however, some may be made from whole grains (check the ingredients for “whole grain” or “whole wheat”): cornbread, corn tortillas, couscous, crackers, flour tortillas, pasta, pitas, pretzels, ready-to-eat cereals</p>
<p><b>Vegetables</b></p> <p>Vegetables are the most important source of beta-carotene and many other vitamins and phytochemicals. Vegetables also provide plenty of fiber. Our bodies convert beta-carotene to vitamin A for healthy skin, glands, immune system, and eye function. Phytochemicals are naturally occurring plant compounds that are believed to fight cancer and other diseases. Vegetables may be fresh, canned or frozen.</p>	<p><b>Dark-green vegetables:</b> bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, kale, spinach</p> <p><b>Red and orange vegetables:</b> acorn, squash, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, red peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, tomato juice</p> <p><b>Starchy vegetables:</b> corn, green peas, lima beans, potatoes</p> <p><b>Other vegetables:</b> artichokes, asparagus, avocado, bean sprouts, beets, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, jicama, mushrooms, okra, onions, snow peas, tomatoes, zucchini</p>
<p><b>Fruit</b></p> <p>Whole fruits provide many essential vitamins and minerals, together with a variety of disease-fighting substances like those in vegetables, and fiber. Fruits are the most important source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is needed to produce collagen, the connective substance that holds cells together and helps maintain blood vessels, bones and cartilage, and teeth.</p>	<p>Apples, apricots, bananas, berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries), 100% fruit juices (unsweetened), grapefruit, grapes, kiwi fruit, mangoes, melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon), nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, prunes, raisins, tangerines. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried. Fruits may also be whole, cut-up or pureed.</p> <p><i>NOTE: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that juice be limited to 4 to 6 ounces per day for children 1 to 6 years of age, and 8 to 12 ounces per day for children 7 to 18 years of age.</i></p>
<p><b>Protein foods</b></p> <p>Protein is needed for growth as well as to maintain muscle, bone and cartilage, teeth, and every system in the body.</p>	<p><b>Meats:</b> lean cuts of beef, ham, lamb, pork, and veal</p> <p><b>Poultry:</b> skinless chicken and turkey, ground chicken and turkey</p> <p><b>Seafood:</b> fish (catfish, cod, herring, salmon, trout, tuna); shellfish (clams, crab, lobster, mussels, oysters, scallops, squid [calamari], shrimp)</p> <p><b>Beans and peas:</b> black beans, black-eyed peas, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans</p> <p><b>Processed soy products:</b> tofu (bean curd made from soybeans), veggie burgers, tempeh, texturized vegetable protein (TVP)</p> <p><b>Nuts and seeds:</b> almonds, cashews, peanuts, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts</p> <p><b>Eggs:</b> chicken eggs, duck eggs</p>
<p><b>Dairy</b></p> <p>Milk is children’s best source of calcium and an important source of protein, riboflavin (vitamin B2), and many other nutrients.</p>	<p>Low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, parmesan, cottage cheese), pudding, frozen yogurt, and ice milk. Calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) is also part of the Dairy Group.</p>

Source: United States Department of Agriculture ChooseMyPlate.gov. Accessed March 1, 2012.

## For more information

### American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org)

### Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) and [www.kidseatright.org](http://www.kidseatright.org)

### US Department of Agriculture and other federal government agencies

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov) (includes information about the new food group symbol, MyPlate, which replaces MyPyramid)

Developed in collaboration with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly American Dietetic Association). For more information about the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, visit their Web site at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

Listing of resources does not imply an endorsement by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP is not responsible for the content of the resources mentioned in this publication. Phone numbers and Web site addresses are as current as possible, but may change at any time.

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