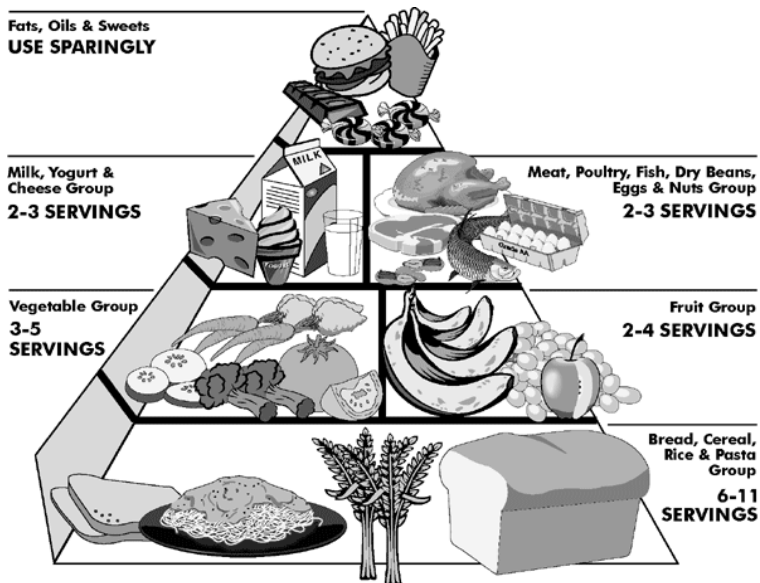


NUTRITION UPDATE

We are fortunate to live in a country with so many opportunities. However, due to the growing popularity of sedentary activities such as video games, television and computer use coupled with the increasing prevalence of obesity in children, the growing availability of fast food and marketing of snack food to children, it has become increasingly crucial to ensure that children maintain a healthy balance of diet and activity. This does not, however, mean that our children are now restricted to rice cakes and spring water while running 10 miles a day! Developing healthy diet and exercise habits can be much more simple and fun than one may imagine. This handout offers many suggestions for including healthy food choices and simple activities easily into our daily lives. As you read these pages, keep in mind the following:

1. Children do not need “diets” in the form of short-term weight loss plans. Establishing life-long healthy eating and activity habits takes time. Which brings us to our next point...
2. Do not become overwhelmed by trying to change everything overnight. When you and your children are ready to make changes, choose one or two at a time. Add others as time allows.
3. Every child and family is unique. Use this advice as a guide, and make changes that work well with your family.
4. If you believe your child is eating too much/not enough, or is gaining/losing too much weight, please call us.

What SHOULD our children eat each day? The USDA has determined that a well-balanced diet contains a healthy combination of each of 5 food groups. (Note: The fruit and vegetable groups are interchangeable.) Review the USDA Food Guide Pyramid below, noting the daily recommendations within each food group.



Serving ranges:

- For children 2-6 yrs old, use the lower numbers.
- For children 7-early teens, use middle numbers.
- For teenagers and adults, use the higher numbers.

What counts as one serving?

- Grain Group: 1 slice of bread
½ cup of cooked rice or pasta (about the size of a shaving cream can lid)
½ cup of cooked cereal
1 oz of ready-to-eat cereal

- Fruit Group:** 1 piece of fruit or melon wedge (about the size of a tennis ball)
 ¾ cup of 100% fruit juice
 ½ cup of canned fruit or ¼ cup of dried fruit
- Vegetables:** ½ cup of chopped raw, canned or cooked vegetables
 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables
 (Note: limit potatoes and corn, for these are mostly starch.)
- Dairy Group:** 1 cup of milk or yogurt
 2 oz of cheese
- Meat Group:** 2-3 oz of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish (about the size of a deck of cards.)
 ½ cup of cooked dry beans
 1 egg counts as 1 oz of lean meat (1/2 serving)
 2 tablespoons of peanut butter = 1 oz lean meat (1/2 serving)

Experiment!! (The following activities can be very educational in assessing your child's food intake.)

- Make a list of everything your child eats over a 1-2 day period and compare both content and serving sizes to the USDA recommendations.
- Measure or weigh out the serving sizes of the foods you most commonly eat.

Helpful Hints for better health:

- Limit high-fat meats (bacon, sausages, spareribs, pastrami, hot dogs, corned beef).
- Trim the fat off of meat.
- Switch from whole milk to skim or 2% milk (if over 2 yrs old).
- Avoid empty calories- (foods with high carbohydrate content but no vitamins, protein or minerals.)
- Switch to diet soda to save on empty calories.
- Drink water instead of soda, and other sugary drinks.
- Whole grains have more fiber and vitamins than processed grains.
- Use reduced fat cheeses.
- Use cooking spray instead of oil or butter.
- Limit juice to 2 cups/day, and use only 100% juice products.

Ways to get more fruits and vegetables into the diet:

1. **Make it fun!** (Convey the message that fruits and vegetables taste good and are just as much fun as the other foods.)
 - Put fruit on cereal in the shape of faces or other designs.
 - Make fruit kabobs (ex: strawberries, grapes, melon, pineapple).
 - Make fruit art. (Ex: broccoli for trees, carrots and celery for flowers, cauliflower for clouds, yellow squash for sun.) Then eat your masterpiece!
 - Make popsicles out of 100% fruit juice.
2. **Make them easy to get.**
 - Keep them cleaned, peeled (if necessary) and stored at **eye level** in the refrigerator or in a big bowl on the table.
 - Buy ready-to-eat packaged fresh vegetables (ex: baby carrots, broccoli, snow peas.)
 - Serve fruits and/or vegetables at every meal.
3. **Try new things.**
 - Reward kids for trying, even if they spit them out.
 - If at first you don't succeed... (some children need to try the same new thing 10-15 times before they accept it.)
 - Start with fruits. Their sweeter taste makes them more appealing to children.
4. **Use fruits and vegetables as snacks and desserts.**

- Make fun dipping sauces for fruits and vegetables out of common items such as catsup, mustard, yogurt, salad dressings, honey, maple syrup or mayonnaise.
- Try frozen grapes as a snack
- Make trail mix out of dried fruits such as cranberries, raisins, apple rings, apricots or bananas.
- Make “ants on a log” by spreading peanut butter on celery and topping with raisins.

5. Disguise them! (What they don't know...!)

- Shred or puree vegetables into sauces, soups and meatballs.
- Add to foods already enjoyed such as macaroni and cheese, rice and potatoes

For more information:

Find cookbooks for children in your local bookstore or library.

Visit websites such as www.keepkidshealthy.com/nutrition.

HEALTHY MEALTIME BEHAVIORS

Sometimes *HOW* we eat has as much an affect as *WHAT* we eat!

Establish a routine. (Children are less likely to snack if they know when they will be eating next.)

- Try to schedule 3 meals and 2 snacks per day, and discourage munching in between.
- Eat a healthy breakfast. Skipping leads to intense hunger and more snacking later.
- Discourage eating in front of TV, video games or in the child's bedroom. (Both snacking and lounging around are encouraged at the same time.)
- Eat as a family. If unable to do daily, aim for 1 or more evenings/week when you all sit down together.

Eat slowly. (It takes 15-20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you are full.)

- Try the old "chew 20-30 times before swallowing" trick.
- Encourage putting the fork down between bites to prevent the "shoveling" or "inhaling" of food!
- Try to eat a meal over 20 minutes, and wait an additional 20 minutes before getting seconds.

Limit portion sizes.

- Use small plates for children. They can still get the satisfaction of cleaning their plate and consume smaller quantities. Then, if they are still hungry, let them ask for seconds.
- When they want seconds, have children take seconds of everything (particularly vegetables) and not just the main dish.

Get kids involved with meal planning and preparation. Not only can this be a fun activity to do together, but children are more likely to comply with meals when they have been a part of the preparation.

- Take kids shopping. Grocery stores or farmers markets with large variety of choices can be particularly fun. Let them pick out something new to try.
- In the kitchen, children can wipe table tops, scrub and rinse food items, carry foods around the kitchen, measure, mix and pour, put things in the trash and other simple activities that you may take for granted.
- Planning a week's meals ahead can save money and time (especially when you are tired.)
- Offer children a choice between healthy options for meals (i.e. "Would you like peas or carrots?").

Remember: YOU are the parent.

- While allowing children to participate in choosing and preparing meals, remember that YOU make the final decisions on the items bought and offered. (You earned this right when you gave birth!!)
- Given the choice of eating what is offered for dinner vs going to bed hungry, most children will soon learn to choose dinner!

Keep high-fat, high-sugar foods/snacks out of the house. *ANYONE* will pick these tastier options over fruits and vegetables.

Drink more water. Not only do our bodies need it, but it makes us less hungry for snacking. For children who dislike plain water, try some of the sugar-free flavored waters on the market.

Eating Out:

- Reduce fast food. When there, encourage healthy choices and discourage super-sizing.
- Use "doggie bags." Some restaurant portion sizes are enough to feed a small country! Take advantage of the free leftovers!

Establish a positive attitude.

Reassure children that they are loved, special and important.

Reward them for trying new foods and making healthy choices!

However, avoid rewarding with food. Try other prizes such as stickers, trading cards or other inexpensive prizes, hugs and kisses or spending time doing an activity of their choice.

Set the example. Your children certainly won't do anything that they don't see you doing.

Finally, remember that part of the fun of eating healthy is the reward of indulging now and again! Allow occasional treats, but simply do so in moderation!!

SIMPLE ACTIVITY BEHAVIORS **(Things to Do Instead of Watching T.V./Video Games)**

For starters: Elementary school-aged kids need at least 30-60mins of moderate to vigorous activity/day. Older adolescents need 20 minutes of vigorous activity 3 times/week or 30 minutes of moderate activity every day. There are many simple ways that children and families can become more active and less sedentary. This page includes several ideas. As you read and consider your children, keep in mind that doing *anything* is better than doing nothing at all, and that one doesn't need to become a marathon runner to be in shape.

Limit sedentary activity (“Lounging around.”)

- Limit TV, video games, computer to 1-2 hours/day.
- Encourage your child to get up and move during commercials, such as doing chores.
- Remove the TV from your child's room.

Experiment!: Try a TV, video-game, and/or computer-free week sometime.

Moderate and Vigorous physical activity: You may be surprised to find out that some very common activities are considered exercise!

Moderate Activities do not need to be completed in one 30-60 minute block. Simply break them up throughout the day! These include walking (at a moderate or brisk pace), bicycling, climbing stairs, dancing, recreational swimming, playing on school playground equipment, hopscotch, skateboarding, raking the lawn, light shoveling, weeding, pushing a lawn mower, scrubbing floors/bathtubs, hanging laundry, sweeping, washing windows, packing/unpacking boxes or bags, cleaning your room, taking out the trash, playing with animals and hand washing/waxing a car.

Vigorous Activities include most competitive sports and activities in which one breaks a sweat and increases their heart rate. These can also include jumping rope, running, skipping, shoveling heavy snow, and other heavy housework.

Add walking or biking to everyday activity.

- At stores and other parking lots, park a distance from the building and enjoy the walk to the door.
- Spend some extra time wandering around places you already visit such as malls, stores and parks.
- Walk a pet.
- Climb stairs instead of taking elevators.
- Walk or ride bike to school, store, church, friends' houses.
- Take walks with family and friends. It is much more fun when you have company!

Other indoor activities:

- Dance to music videos or radio.
- Hopscotch, rump rope, hide and seek, build an obstacle course (providing you have the space!)
- Adolescents may enjoy workout or dance videos.
- Do arts and crafts, board games, homework, or other activities. (Busy children are not snacking!)

Organized community activities.

- Pick something that the child will enjoy.
- Encourage signing up for community sports leagues, gymnastics, dance classes, scouting, church groups. (But not too many. Avoid burnout!)
- Support community efforts to provide safe play areas for children as well as promote healthy eating in schools (i.e. school lunch programs or controlling vending machines in schools.)

Many common household chores as listed above can be considered moderate exercise. Others include washing windows or floors, raking leaves, making beds, vacuuming, and dusting.

Plan active family outings to places such as parks, zoos, or science centers.