



Food Guide Pyramid

Fats, Oils, and Sweets
USE SPARINGLY

Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese
Group
2-3 SERVINGS

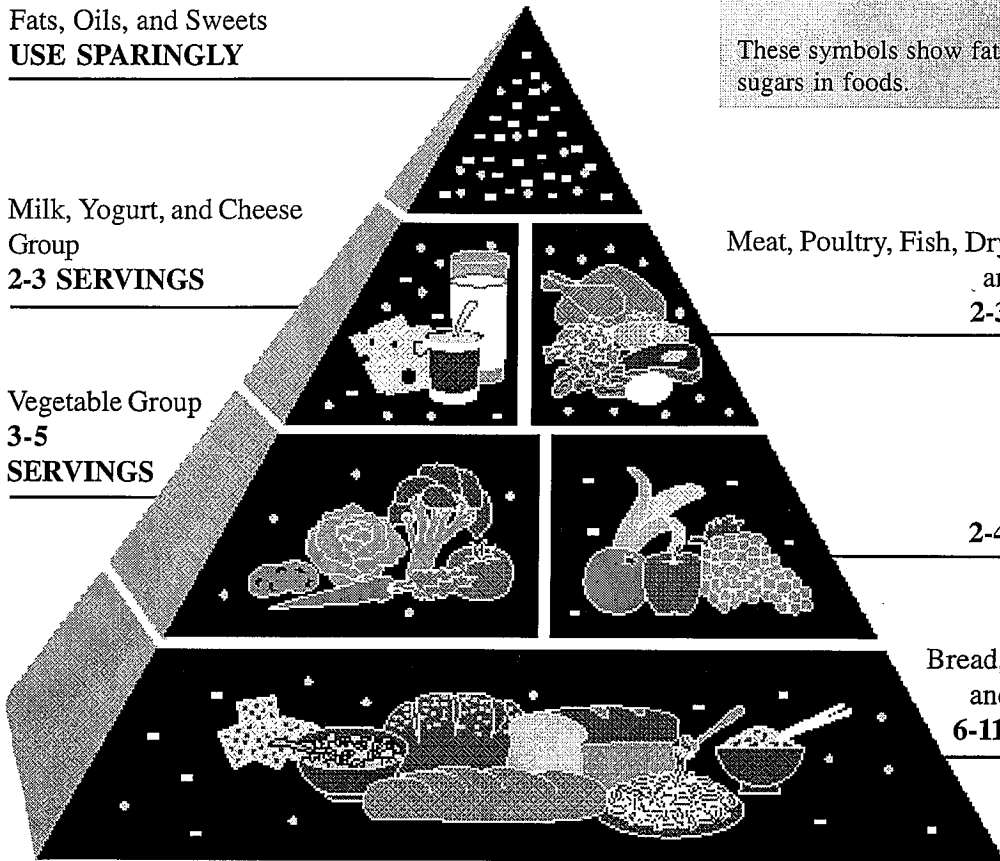
Vegetable Group
**3-5
SERVINGS**

KEY
 Fat (naturally occurring and added)
 Sugars (added)
 These symbols show fat and added sugars in foods.

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs,
and Nuts Group
2-3 SERVINGS

Fruit Group
2-4 SERVINGS

Bread, Cereal, Rice,
and Pasta Group
6-11 SERVINGS



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Parents,
 This information is provided to you today on behalf of a special visiting program your care provider is taking part in. If you would like to receive similar visits and learn more about how your child grows and develops, please contact your local Parents as Teachers program or call 1-866-PAT4YOU to find a program in your area, or visit our website at www.patnc.org

Eating Healthy as a Family

Have you noticed how you and your child eat differently? He eats certain foods because they taste and look good not because they are healthy and good for him. It is our job as parents to offer a variety of foods. The choices offered need to help him grow strong and be healthy. Your child needs smaller portions of food, offered more frequently. A good eating pattern for your child is:

Breakfast	Mid-afternoon snack
Mid-morning snack	Dinner
Lunch	Bedtime snack, if needed

Your child learns much through imitation. When he sees his family sitting together and enjoying a meal, it is easier for him to accept new foods. Mealtimes in your home should be pleasant, calm, and full of conversation. Any healthy, nutritious food you offer your child at mealtime is also a good snack choice. Some fun and nutritious snack ideas include:

- Different colored and shaped pasta
- Toast—cut into shapes
- Dry unsweetened cereal
- Crackers with cream cheese or spreads
- Fresh vegetables—small pieces
- Lightly sweetened pudding
- Fresh fruit—easy-to-eat pieces
- Cheese cubes

Foods to avoid

- Do not give small foods such as grapes and hot dogs to your child. They may cause him to choke. All foods are potential choking hazards. Be sure to watch your child while he is eating and drinking.
- Do not serve high-nitrite meats such as hot dogs, ham, bacon and sausage very often.
- Water with high nitrate levels. Have your water checked and use distilled water for the first eight months if you live in a high-risk area.
- Do not serve your child honey until he is twelve months of age. About a third of all cases of infant botulism are related to ingestion of honey.
- Herbal tea and caffeine should be avoided. The tannins in green and black teas tend to inhibit iron absorption. Caffeine reduces calcium availability needed for bone and tooth formation. It also stimulates the nervous system.
- Alcohol, even small amounts, can lead to permanent brain and liver damage in your child.
- High-calorie sodas, fruit drinks, juice should be given to your child in moderation. Your child should have no more than 4 ounces a day of fruit juice.
- Candy, like soda, is a high source of sugar and has no food value.

Your child's eating habits are largely determined by age two. You play a very important role in teaching good nutrition to your young child. You can do this one snack or meal at a time.

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Seven Highly Effective Habits for Food Safety in Your Home

- **Don't be a dope, wash with soap...**wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- **Make it a law, use the fridge to thaw...**Always thaw or marinate meat, poultry and seafood in the refrigerator, *never* on the counter.
- **Watch that plate, don't cross-contaminate...**Don't let juices from raw meat, poultry or seafood come in contact with foods that have been cooked and are ready to be eaten or with foods that will be eaten raw.
- **Cook it right before you take a bite...**Always cook perishable foods thoroughly. Ground meats (beef, veal, lamb and pork) should be cooked to an internal temperature of 155 degrees F. All poultry products should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. Use a metal stemmed thermometer to assure that meat and poultry have reached a safe internal temperature.
- **Hot or cold is how to hold...**Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid the danger zone—between 41°F and 140 °F. Food borne bacteria multiply rapidly in this zone, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes.
- **More than two is bad for you...**Never leave perishable food at room temperature over two hours. The two-hour time limit includes preparation time as well as serving time.
- **Don't get sick, cool it quick...**Place foods in shallow containers before refrigerating to make sure all the food cools quickly.



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How Nutrition can Effect Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is considered one of the most common preventable environmental diseases in young children. Lead poisoning occurs when lead enters the body. Any one at any age can be poisoned by lead, but lead is most dangerous to young children under the age of seven and to pregnant women.

Children are at high risk because they tend to have poor hygiene habits and because they put so many things in their mouths. Your child may not show visible signs of lead poisoning until the level is very dangerous. The only way to know if your child has elevated levels of lead in her blood is to have a blood lead test. Check with your health care provider for a recommended schedule of testing.

Lead poisoning can be treated but prevention is best. Research suggests that well-nourished children are less likely to experience the toxic effects of lead. Your child's diet needs to have sufficient amounts of iron, calcium, protein, and vitamins. Here are some food preparation recommendations:

- Wash your hands and your child's hands frequently, particularly before eating
- Always clean surfaces such as counter tops where your food is prepared
- Don't allow your child to pick up spilled food or eat off the floor
- Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating them

- If you have lead pipes in your home, run the cold tap water for two minutes before using it for drinking, cooling, or preparing formula. If the community water is high in lead, use distilled water for drinking or food preparation. Never prepare formula with hot water. Lead and rust in the hot water heater can contaminate the formula.

Prevent lead poisoning by keeping the dust from deteriorated lead paint out of your home. Wet-mop with a high phosphate cleaner. Keep a special bucket and sponges for cleaning lead painted surfaces such as windowsills. Check all painted surfaces for cracking and flaking paint. Never vacuum lead dust or chips with your regular vacuum cleaner. Toys and pacifiers that your child puts in her mouth should be washed often. Keep out dirt and dust from outdoors. Take your shoes off at the door.

Use caution when your child plays outdoors. Paint chips and dust may have settled in the soil. Your child may get this dust on her toys, feet, and hands while playing.

If you live in an older neighborhood or home, follow the precautions mentioned above and consider having the paint in your home and the soil tested for lead contamination.

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Your Child and Ear Infections

Middle ear infections, sometimes called otitis media, pose a potential threat to your child's hearing and language development. Eighty percent of all children will be diagnosed with at least one ear infection before the age of three. Since your child is in a care setting for part of her day, her chances for getting an ear infection are increased.

Ear infections themselves are not contagious. They are secondary infections that develop when your child's middle ear fills up with fluid. This fluid permits bacteria or viruses to grow. When your child has a cold, or is stuffed up with allergies, the Eustachian tubes in her ears may become blocked, filling the middle ear with fluid.

If your child is an infant or a toddler, she is especially susceptible because her Eustachian tubes are shorter, which permits bacteria from her mouth to have easier access to her ears. Her Eustachian tubes are also more pliable, making them likelier to collapse and trap fluid in the middle ear. As your child grows, not only do the Eustachian tubes grow in diameter the tubes will drop from a more horizontal position to an angle, allowing the fluid to flow more naturally.

If your child is exposed to secondhand cigarette smoke, she may suffer from more ear infections than unexposed children do. Secondhand smoke appears to reduce a child's resistance to colds and other infections that lead to middle ear infections.

If your baby is being fed by a bottle, the position you put her in may also cause her to be at risk for ear infections. When your baby drinks from a bottle while lying down, or from a bottle that is propped, any liquid in her middle ear can pool there and not drain down the throat. This trapped fluid can become infected, causing an ear infection. She needs to be held more upright, thus allowing the fluid to drain down the back of the throat. Hold your baby when feeding her. It will help her build a strong attachment with you as well as lower her risk for ear infections.

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