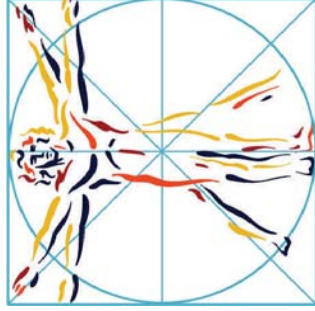


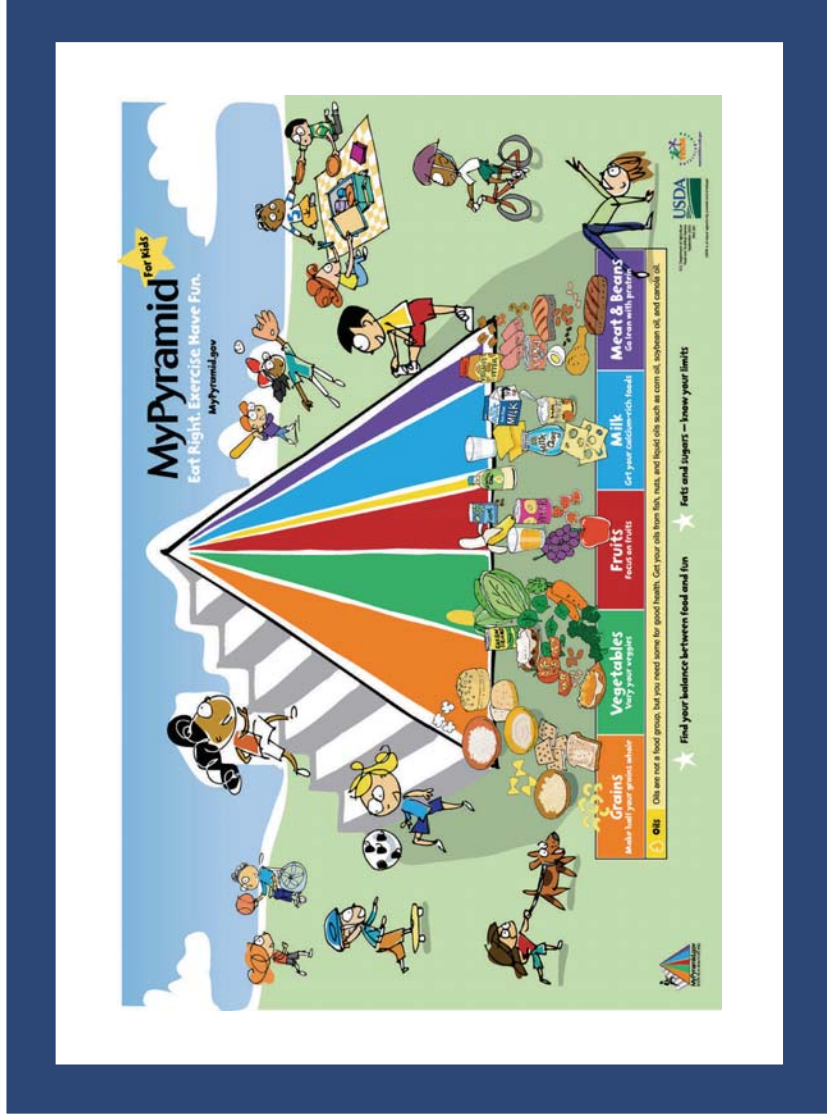
Preschool Children Healthy Eating and Activity



Giving Your Body the Best

All parents want their preschool children, ages two to five, to be healthy and grow normally. Without a healthy lifestyle, children, like adults, can develop health problems such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. It is your responsibility as a parent to establish healthy eating and physical activity habits while your child is young.

In today's society it is easy for children to fall into the pattern of too many calories and too little physical activity. MyPyramid for Kids recommends eat right, exercise and have fun.



Preschool children need between 1000 and 1600 calories a day. For a personalized guide, refer to handout or go to the Internet Web site MyPyramid.gov. It is as easy as one, two, three. Just select age, gender and activity level. MyPyramid will tell you the number of calories and the amount of food from each food group that your child needs.

DAILY AMOUNT FROM EACH FOOD GROUP				
Calorie Level	1000	1200	1400	1600
Grains	3-oz. eq.	4-oz. eq.	5-oz. eq.	5-oz. eq.
Vegetables	1 cup	1 ½ cups	1 ½ cups	2 cups
Fruits	1 cup	1 cup	1 ½ cups	1 ½ cups
Milk	2 cups	2 cups	2 cups	3 cups
Meat and Beans	2-oz. eq.	3-oz. eq.	4-oz. eq.	5-oz. eq.
Oils	3 tsp.	4 tsp.	4 tsp.	5 tsp.
Discretionary Calories	165	170	170	130

Your preschooler needs between 1000 and 1600 calories each day.

Essential Nutrients

Preschoolers will get adequate nutrients by following MyPyramid recommendations. They need:

- **Carbohydrates** for energy. The Grain Group is an excellent source. Vegetables and fruit also supply carbohydrates along with essential vitamins and minerals.
- **Protein** for growth and repair of body tissues. Food from the Meat and Bean Group along with the Milk Group are good sources of protein.
- **Fat** for energy, proper growth and development. Limit food high in saturated fats, cholesterol and trans fats. Eat lean meat and avoid high-fat cooking methods.
- **Vitamin A** to help eyes adjust to changes in light. Dark green and orange vegetables are good sources.
- **Vitamin C** for wound healing and a healthy immune system. Citrus fruits and juices are the best sources.
- **Calcium** for strong bones and teeth. It is mainly found in milk and milk products.
- **Iron** for healthy red blood cells. The Meat and Bean Group is a good source of iron.
- **Water** to regulate body functions and prevent dehydration.
- **Fiber** to prevent constipation. Whole grain breads and cereals, fruit, vegetables and dried beans, peas and lentils are good sources of fiber.

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Essential Nutrients

- Carbohydrates
- Protein
- Fat
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Calcium
- Iron
- Water
- Fiber



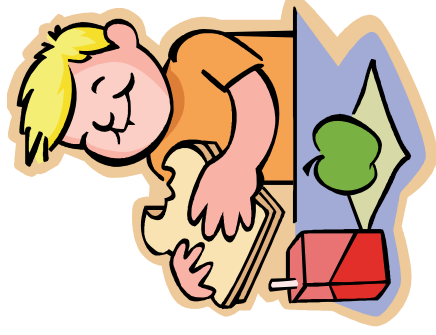
MyPyramid—Eat Right

1. **Make half your grains whole.** Choose whole grain foods, such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal and brown rice.
2. **Vary your veggies.** Be sure to include dark green and orange vegetables, like broccoli, spinach, carrots and sweet potatoes.
3. **Focus on fruits.** Offer fruit at meals and snacks. Choose fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Limit fruit juice.
4. **Get calcium-rich foods.** Serve fat free and low-fat milk and milk products several times a day.
5. **Go lean with protein.** Serve lean meat, chicken, turkey and fish. Be sure to include food made with dried beans, peas and lentils.
6. **Change your oil.** Children need some oil for good health. Choose heart-healthy oils such as olive, canola, corn and soybean oil.
7. **Do not sugarcoat it.** Choose food and beverages that do not have sugar and other sweeteners listed on the food label as one of the first ingredients. Added sugar contributes calories but few, if any, nutrients.

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MyPyramid—Eat Right

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7. Do not sugarcoat it



There are some easy things you can do to make feeding your preschool child a success.

- Recognize your child's hunger cues.
- Provide nutritious food and let your child choose.
- Encourage new foods.
- Set a good example.
- Create a positive environment.
- Do not reward with food.

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Make Feeding Your Preschooler a Success

- Recognize your child's hunger cues
- Provide nutritious food and let your child choose
- Encourage new foods
- Set a good example
- Create a positive environment
- Do not reward with food



Recognize Your Child's Hunger Cues

Children are born with a natural ability to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full. Do not force your preschooler to eat. Doing so may encourage overeating and the loss of fullness sensitivity. It may also create a pattern that could eventually lead to obesity.

Recognize Your Child's Hunger Cues



**Forcing your preschooler to eat
may encourage overeating.**

Provide Nutritious Food and Let Your Child Choose

Plan nutritious meals and snacks. Offer a variety of food from each food group. Limit food that is high in calories and low in nutrients. Expose your preschool child to different flavors and textures.

Provide Nutritious Food, Let Your Child Choose

- Plan nutritious meals and snacks
- Offer a variety of food
- Limit food high in calories and low in nutrients
- Offer different flavors and textures



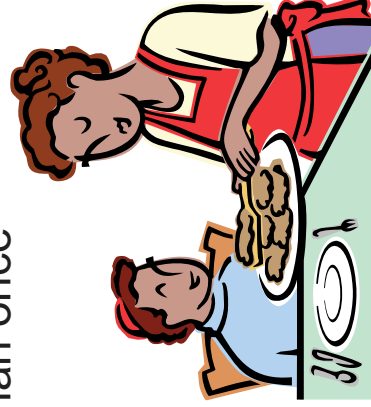
Encourage New Foods

Preschoolers can be very picky eaters. If your child does not like a new food, offer it again later. It often takes five to ten times for a new food to be accepted.

Most preschoolers experience “food jags” and may for a time only eat certain foods. This can be very frustrating when you are planning healthy meals and snacks for your family. It is important to continue offering your child a variety of food. “Food jags” are usually temporary and disappear on their own.

Encourage New Foods

- Preschoolers can be very picky eaters
- Offer new foods more than once
- Understand “food jags”





EFNEP—Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

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Reference

American Dietetic Association
Iowa State University Extension—EFNEP
WWW.IHPPYRAMID.GOV

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