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Be aware of choking hazards when choosing food options for your child!

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## Why is Good Nutrition Important?

There are many reasons why good nutrition is so important for growing children!

- Vitamins, minerals and other nutrients help your child have a healthy weight.
- Nutrients help children to concentrate so they can learn, and give them energy to play!
- The right foods and drinks help your child to build strong bones and muscles.
- Healthy eating also helps your little one recover from illness or injury more easily.
- A habit of making good food and drink choices gives your child a reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancers, and bone diseases in the future.

## Healthy Food and Drink Choices

Poor nutrition can cause health problems, overweight, and obesity. Making sure that your child gets the right amount of nutrients in their body, you may help prevent these health problems. By teaching young children healthy eating habits, you are teaching them tools that will help them for a lifetime. Check out these ideas for easy ways to include healthy food choices in your family's meals.

### Healthy Snacks:

- Fruits— Grapes, melon, banana, pear, peach, plum, strawberries
- Vegetables— tomatoes, celery, carrot and cucumber sticks, sliced peppers, sugar snap peas
- Dairy—yogurt, cheese
- Whole grains— cereal, oatmeal
- Proteins—Peanut Butter, eggs
- Smoothies—mix fruits and veggies!
- Snack mix: nuts, pretzels, cereal, popcorn, raisins

### Add veggies to sandwiches or tacos:

- Chopped green leafy lettuce or spinach
- Tomato, pepper or red onion slices
- Shredded carrots or cabbage
- Slice of avocado



### Cook dishes with vegetables:

- Beef stir fry— broccoli, carrots, pea pods, peppers
- Chicken casserole— peas, carrots, corn, green beans
- Spaghetti/lasagna— tomato sauce
- Beef veggie soup— carrots, peas, tomatoes
- Chicken tacos/ quesadillas— lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, salsa

Food isn't the only thing to be mindful of. Your child's nutrition also comes from the beverages they drink. Follow these guidelines for how often to drink these drinks.

### Anytime:

- Water: Plain or you can flavor water with crushed berries or dress it up with ice cubes or fun straws!
- Milk: whole milk for ages 1-2, low-fat or fat-free for ages 2 and up.

### Sometimes

- Juice: Limit to 4 to 6 oz a day for 1-6 year olds - 100% juice (*check for no added sugar*)
- *Infants should never be given juice!*

### Never or Special Events ONLY

- Soda, Coffee, Tea
- Energy & sports drinks

\*Caffeine may increase your child's risk of cavities, affect their behavior, and lead to dehydration.



# Did you know?

**In a pinch for time? Try these healthier alternatives at your favorite fast food spot:**

**Burger King**

- Hamburger with 1% low-fat chocolate milk and BK fresh apple fries with caramel sauce  
OR

- 4 piece nuggets with apple slices and Capri Sun

**McDonald's**

- 4 piece nuggets with BBQ sauce, fruit & yogurt parfait  
OR apple slices, low-fat yogurt and apple juice

**Subway**

- Mini turkey and cheddar on wheat with mustard, lettuce, and tomato & raisins

**KFC**

- Li'l Bucket (original recipe chicken bites), side of green beans, side of apple sauce, & Capri Sun

- Children ages 2-3 should drink 2 cups of milk each day. Calcium helps to build strong bones and teeth!
- Soda has no nutritional value and can cause tooth decay!
- Too much juice adds a lot of calories and not as much fiber as an actual piece of fruit!
- Limit sugar and salt: cut down on processed foods and opt for fresh fruits and vegetables instead.
- Fruits and vegetables are among the most important foods for providing your little one with enough vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- It may be normal for your child's appetite to vary. They may seem starving one day and refuse food the next. Talk to your child's pediatrician about any concerns.
- Depending on age, size, and activity level, toddlers need between 1,000-1,400 calories per day.



## What about Picky Eaters??

Rather than simply insist your child eat a new food, try the following:

- Offer a new food only when your child is hungry and rested.
- Present only one new food at a time.
- Make it fun: present the food as a game, a play-filled experience. Or cut the food into unusual shapes.
- Serve new foods with favorite foods to increase acceptance.
- Eat the new food yourself; children love to imitate.
- Have your child help to prepare foods. Often they will be more willing to try something when they helped to make it.
- Limit beverages. Picky eaters often fill up on liquids instead.
- Have scheduled meal times; limit snacks to 2 / day.
- If your child is lactose intolerant or doesn't like dairy, incorporate calcium-rich foods like fortified

### Healthy Pizza Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 whole wheat Pita
- 3-4 tablespoons tomato sauce\*
- 1/4-1/3 cup low-fat shredded mozzarella cheese
- *Optional:* Assorted vegetables: onion, mushrooms, peppers, tomatoes  
Assorted meats: pre-cooked ground turkey or beef, chicken

*\*You can substitute spaghetti sauce or salsa for tomato sauce*

Preparation:

Assemble like a pizza. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

**(Makes 1)**

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**This information should not take the place of advice from your pediatrician. Please consult your child's doctor.**

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**Information was gathered and used from the following sources. For more information on these and other topics, please visit the following:**

- [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)
- [www.parenting.com](http://www.parenting.com)
- [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

- [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com)
- [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org)
- [www.helpguide.org/articles/](http://www.helpguide.org/articles/)