



# Healthier diet of young children

Overweight and obesity in children have become the most prevalent nutritional problems in the United States. Since 1980, the rates have doubled for children and tripled for teenagers. More than 15% of all children 6 – 19 years of age are overweight. More than 23% of African American and Mexican American teens are overweight.

To get children interested in food and meals, involve your child in the kitchen, meal planning and grocery shopping. Having children involved in meal preparation will increase the likelihood of their trying new foods. They will be interested in trying food they have helped prepare. To cut down on constant snacking (grazing), eat meals around the kitchen or dining room table at set times.

When preparing family meals, think about cutting down on fat and sugar and increasing fruits, vegetables and fiber. Here are some suggestions for substitutions in meal planning and preparation:



## Substitutions

### Instead of

### Use

Butter, margarine, cream cheese	<b>Lite butter, margarine or cream cheese</b>
Mayonnaise	<b>Lowfat or fat-free mayonnaise</b>
Frying	<b>Baking, sautéing, grilling</b>
Whole milk	<b>Skim or lowfat milk</b>
Cheese	<b>Lowfat and reduced-fat cheese</b>
Cookies	<b>Animal crackers, vanilla wafers, graham crackers</b>
Ice cream	<b>Fruit bars, lowfat frozen yogurt, sugar-free Popsicles</b>
White bread	<b>Whole-grain bread</b>
Soda, punch, fruit drinks, sport drinks	<b>Water and 100% fruit juice</b>
Sugared cereal	<b>Whole-grain cereal</b>
Candy bars, chocolate	<b>Dried fruit, fruit cocktail, cinnamon apple sauce</b>

# Use the Pyramid

## Using the Food Guide Pyramid to feed your child

The Food Guide Pyramid way of eating can also be used to plan children's meals. A child-sized serving is one-fourth to one-third of an adult serving size. Teen-agers need full adult servings.

### The pyramid food groups are:

<b>Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta Group</b>	6 servings	2 to 3 tablespoons of pasta, rice, macaroni, ¼ to ½ slice of bread, 1 to 2 graham crackers
<b>Vegetable Group</b>	3 servings	2 to 3 tablespoons of peas, corn, green beans, mashed potatoes, ½ cup of lettuce
<b>Fruit Group</b>	2 servings	¼ cup blueberries or raspberries ½ cup 100% citrus juice (orange) ½ medium orange, 4-6 medium strawberries, 1 medium tangerine ½ cup watermelon pieces ½ medium apple, banana, peach, pear or nectarine, 6-8 grapes, ½ cup cut-up fresh, canned or cooked fruit
<b>Milk Group</b>	2 servings	¼ to 1/3 nonfat or lowfat milk, yogurt, pudding made with milk, ½ to 1/3 oz of cheese
<b>Meat Group</b>	2 servings	½ to ¾ oz of meat, chicken, fish

Another measure for serving food is to serve a tablespoon for each year of child's life.

### Snack time

Snacks are important part of a child's diet. It is important to understand that young children need more frequent meals than adults, and they need snacks between meals to support growth and development. A mid-morning and a mid-afternoon snack can increase child's intake of dairy, fruits and vegetables.

When the snacks are planned, the child will most likely have a healthier snack. Also, having snacks will cut down on the feeling of hunger and less likelihood of overeating at mealtimes by going for second helpings.



**Here are some ideas for healthy snacks:**

## **healthy snacks**

**milk**

**lowfat fruited yogurt**

**string cheese**

**instant pudding made with nonfat milk**

**frozen fruit bars**

**fresh fruit (peeled and cut up)**

**fruit juice**

**individual servings of applesauce or canned fruit**

**raisins**

**dried pineapple rings**

**cut-up vegetables with lowfat salad dressing**

**baby carrots**

**graham crackers**

**pretzels**

**dry cereal**

**vanilla wafers**

**animal crackers**

**soft pretzels**

**chicken taco**

**half of a grilled cheese sandwich**



## Breakfast:

Cereal and milk with fruit on the side make a nutritious and filling breakfast. It is fast, nutritious and easy to prepare. Just make sure the cereal is made from whole grains and does not have a lot of added sugar and salt. You can do that by checking the list of ingredients carefully. The FIRST ingredient on the label should be a whole grain.

### Cereals Made from Whole Grains

Cheerios  
Wheat Chex  
Grape Nuts  
Healthy Choice Toasted Brown Sugar Squares  
Just Right with Fruit & Nuts  
Kashi  
Raisin Squares Mini-Wheats  
Bite-Size Frosted Mini-Wheats  
Frosted Mini-Wheats  
Muesli  
Golden Wheat Nutri-Grain  
Almond-Raisin Nutri-Grain  
Almond Oatmeal Crisp  
Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal Crisp  
Raisin Oatmeal Crisp  
Oatmeal Squares  
Puffed Wheat  
Shredded Wheat  
Shredded Wheat & Bran  
Frosted Shredded Wheat  
Spoon Size Shredded Wheat  
Crispy 'n' Raisins Wheaties

### All Bran or High Bran Cereals

100% Bran  
Bran Buds All Bran  
Extra Fiber All-Bran  
Original All-Bran  
Bran Flakes  
Multi-Bran Chex  
Complete Wheat Bran Flakes  
Complete Oat Bran Flakes  
Fiber One  
Oat Bran  
Oat Bran Flakes  
Oat Bran Flakes with Raisins  
Organic Bran with Raisins  
Raisin Bran  
Raisin Bran Flakes  
Whole Grain Wheat Raisin Bran  
Raisin Bran Total



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