

Nutrition On Your Own



Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

A Daily Guide for 2- to 6-Year-Olds



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Did you know there is a new Food Guide Pyramid that is just for young children?

This pyramid is for children 2 to 6 years old. The Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children helps you decide what to feed your child and helps children learn about healthy foods. The pyramid places all foods into groups and then tells you how many servings from each group you should offer your child each day. Let's take a closer look.

The Grain Group

Offer your child 6 servings per day.

The grain group includes bread, rice, pasta, tortillas, cooked cereal and ready-to-eat cereal. These foods provide your child with minerals, vitamins and fiber. Fiber can help keep your child's digestive tract healthy and prevent constipation.



 and answer question No. 1 on your worksheet.

The Vegetable Group

Offer your child 3 servings per day.

The vegetable group provides your child with vitamins A and C, minerals, and fiber. The vegetable group includes fresh, frozen and canned vegetables, and vegetable juice. Offer vegetables often; the more your child sees them, the more likely he is to enjoy them.



 and answer question No. 2 on your worksheet.

The Fruit Group

Offer your child 2 servings per day.

The fruit group includes fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruit and 100% fruit juices. The fruit group provides vitamins A and C, fiber and the mineral potassium.



Most children like juice. However, limit your child's juice intake to no more than 6 ounces per day. Drinking too much juice can keep your child from eating other nutritious foods.

STOP and answer question No. 3 on your worksheet.

The Milk Group

Offer your child 2 servings per day.

Foods in the milk group include milk, yogurt and cheese. These foods provide your child with vitamins A and D, calcium and other minerals. Calcium and protein help build strong bones.



STOP and answer question No. 4 on your worksheet.

The Meat Group

Offer your child 2 servings per day.

The meat group includes beans, lentils, peanut butter, eggs, chicken, beef, turkey, fish and pork. These foods provide your child with protein and are good sources of the minerals iron and zinc.



STOP and answer question No. 5 on your worksheet.

Fats and Sweets

Eat less from this group.

Limit foods from the tip of the pyramid; they are high in fat, oil and sugar. This group includes chips, cookies, cakes, Kool-Aid, candy, salad dressing, butter, lard and oil. Soda and fruit drinks are also in this group.

Variety, Variety, Variety

Because foods from each group provide your child with important vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, it is important for your child to eat from all the food groups. By giving your child a variety of foods, you are making sure he gets all the nutrients he needs to grow and be healthy. If your child won't eat a certain food, don't worry, offer another food from the same group to make sure he gets the nutrients he needs from that group. For example, if your child doesn't like milk, try giving him cheese, yogurt or pudding. These foods provide your child with some of the same nutrients milk provides, including calcium.



Young Children Can Be Difficult to Feed

Your child may not always want to eat the healthy foods you offer. Don't argue with your child about food or force her to eat. Set a good example for your child and follow these tips.

You should decide:

- what foods to offer
- when foods are offered
- where foods are offered

Your child should decide:

- which foods to eat from the foods you offer
- how much food to eat

Remember, young children learn by watching what their parents do.

Physical Activity Is Important for Your Child

The pictures around the outside of the pyramid show children playing and being active. The best way to get your child to be physically active is to be active with her. Fun, simple activities you can do with your child include: going for walks, going to a park, playing catch, dancing and washing the car. Regular physical activity and eating foods from the Food Guide Pyramid help your child grow healthy and strong.

 and answer question No. 6 on your worksheet.



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Worksheet

Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

1. **The Grain Group**

Which foods from the grain group does your child like? _____

2. **The Vegetable Group**

What is your child's favorite vegetable? _____

3. **The Fruit Group**

What is your child's favorite fruit? _____

4. **The Milk Group**

Which foods from the milk group does your child like? _____

5. **The Meat Group**

Which foods from the meat group does your child like? _____

6. **Physical Activity Is Important for Your Child**

What activities or games does your child enjoy? _____



What Have You Learned?

1. Draw a line from the food group in the left column to the number of servings the Food Guide Pyramid recommends per day from that group.

<u>Food Group</u>	<u>Number of Servings Recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid</u>
Grain group	2 servings per day
Vegetable group	Eat less
Fruit group	3 servings per day
Milk group	6 servings per day
Meat group	2 servings per day
Fats and Sweets	2 servings per day

2. Remember, foods from the same group have similar vitamins, minerals and nutrients. If your child won't eat meat, chicken or fish, what other food could you offer from the same group? Circle the name of the food.

a. Milk b. Beans c. Potatoes

3. Write a "P" next to the things that **parents** should do and a "C" next to the things that **children** should do.

_____ decide **how much** to eat
 _____ decide **what** foods are offered
 _____ decide **when** foods are offered
 _____ decide **which** foods to eat

Check your answers using the answer key. →

Answer Key

1. Grain group, 6 servings
 2. Beans
 3. C decide **how much** to eat
 P decide **what** foods are offered
 P decide **when** foods are offered
 C decide **which** foods to eat

