

Daily Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

A special Food Guide Pyramid can help you teach your preschooler what to eat to help them grow and stay healthy. The Pyramid divides food into five major food groups:

- Grains
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Milk
- Meat

Foods are those that many children know and enjoy. The small tip of the pyramid shows fats and sweets, foods containing empty calories.

From ages 2 through 5, your child grows about 2 1/2 inches in height and gains 4 to 5 pounds a year. Actual calorie needs vary with differing rates of growth and activity patterns.



Encourage healthy food choices by using the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

Healthy Eating Tips

BE PATIENT. Young children may not be interested in trying new foods. Offer a new food more than once. Let your child notice how the rest of the family enjoys it.

Daily Food Guide for 2 to 6 Year Olds

BE A PLANNER.

Most young children need a snack or two in addition to three regular daily meals.

- Offer foods from three or more of the five major food groups for breakfast and lunch.

- Offer foods from four or more of the five major food groups for the “main meal.”

- Plan snacks so they are not served too close to mealtime. Offer foods from two or more of the five major food groups.

BE ADVENTUROUS.

At the store ask your young child to choose a new vegetable or fruit, for a “family try-a-new-food” night.

Child-Size Servings

- ☞ A general rule is to serve young children 1 tablespoon of food per year of age (about 1/4 to 1/3 an adult serving).
- ☞ Children 2 to 3 years of age need the same variety of foods as 4 to 6 year-olds but may need fewer calories. Offering smaller servings and allowing them to ask for more, satisfies their hunger and does not waste food.
- ☞ By the time children are 4 years old, they can eat amounts that count as regular Food Guide Pyramid servings eaten by older family members: 1/2 cup fruit or vegetable, 3/4 cup juice, 1 slice bread, 2 to 3 ounces cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish.
- ☞ A good estimate of a serving for a 2 to 3 year-old child is about 2/3 of what counts as a regular Food Guide Pyramid serving.
- ☞ Children age 2 - 6 years need 2 servings from the milk group each day.
- ☞ Offer a variety of foods from the five major food groups, and let your children decide how much to eat.

Standard Servings for Children

Serving size for a -	2-3 year old	4-5 year old
Fruits and Vegetables		
Raw	1/2 medium	1/2-1 medium
Cooked	2-3 Tbsp	4-5 Tbsp
Juice	1/3-1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Breads and Cereals		
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2-1 slice
Cooked Cereal, Rice or Pasta	1/4-1/3 cup	1/4-1/2 cup
Ready-to-Eat Cereal	1/3 cup	1/2 cup
Milk/Milk Products		
Milk, Yogurt	1/2-3/4 cup	3/4 cup
Custard, Milk Pudding	4-6 Tbsp	6 Tbsp
Cheese - 1 oz=1" cube	2/3-1 oz	1 oz
Meat/Meat Alternates		
Meat, Poultry	2-3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Fish	1 oz	2 oz
Eggs	1	1
Cooked Dried Beans or Peas	1/3 cup	1/2 cup

Plan for Your Young Child . . . The Pyramid Way

Use this chart to track your child's eating. Fill in a triangle when your child eats a food from a food group. At the end of the week, if you see only a few blank pyramids . . . keep up the good work. If you notice several blank pyramids, offer foods from the missing food groups in the days to come.

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
MILK	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△
MEAT	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△
VEGETABLE	△△△	△△△	△△△	△△△	△△△	△△△	△△△
FRUIT	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△	△△
GRAIN	△△△ △△△	△△△ △△△	△△△ △△△	△△△ △△△	△△△ △△△	△△△ △△△	△△△ △△△

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