

## Healthy Eating: Helping Your Child Eat Healthy Foods



### How can you help your child eat healthy foods?

Healthy eating means eating a variety of foods from all food groups. This helps your child get the nutrients (such as protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, and minerals) he or she needs for normal growth.

Encourage your child to eat:

- Fruits and vegetables.
- Lean meats.
- Nonfat and low-fat dairy products.
- Whole grains.

Limit these foods:

- Sweet liquids, such as soda, fruit juices, and sport drinks.
- Sugary foods, such as cake and cookies.
- Highly processed foods.
- Fast foods.

### Offer healthy choices

Try to keep a variety of healthy and appealing food choices available to your child. Be adventurous. Choose different foods in each food group.

Healthy eating doesn't mean that your child has to give up all desserts and treats. Those types of foods can be okay now and then. Just remember that moderation is the goal.

### Teach children about healthy foods

At the dinner table, point out the different food groups in the meal. Make a game of naming the food groups to help children learn the importance of variety and nutrition.

Let your children start helping you cook as soon as they show interest. Teach them simple, healthy recipes.

Let older children help you with shopping. This gives you a chance to teach them about the food groups and food labels.

### What are some choices from each food group?

Within each food group, there are choices that are healthier (foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars) and those that are less healthy (foods with added sugars and solid fats).

Choose healthier foods more often and less healthy foods less often.

The table shows some specific foods from each food group, with general recommendations about how often to eat them.

- **"Anytime"** foods are lowest in sugar and fat. They're lower in calories and have more nutrients. Offer these foods anytime.
- **"Sometimes"** foods have more sugar, fat, and calories. They should be eaten less often than "anytime" foods.
- **"Once in a while"** foods have the most sugar and fat. They have a lot of calories and aren't as nutritious. Serve smaller portions, and have them only on occasion.

Examples from the food groups			
Food group	Anytime	Sometimes	Once in a while
Grains	Whole wheat bread, corn tortillas, low-sugar whole grain cereal	White bread, baked chips, white rice	Donuts, croissants, sugared cereals
Vegetables	Fresh vegetables, plain frozen vegetables, dried vegetables (no oil)	Vegetables canned with salt, vegetable juice, dried vegetables (with oil)	Creamed vegetables, vegetables with full-fat dip, french fries, hash browns
Fruits	Fresh fruit, plain frozen fruit, fruit canned in water or juice	Dried fruit, fruit juice or frozen juice bars (100% juice), fruit canned in light syrup	Fruit canned in heavy syrup, fruit drinks
Dairy	Fat-free or 1% plain milk, nonfat and low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt, string cheese	2% milk, frozen yogurt, pudding from fat-free or 1% milk, low-fat chocolate milk, full-fat cheese	Ice cream, whole milk, cream cheese, sour cream
Protein foods	Lean beef, pork, skinless chicken, fish, plain beans	Eggs, nuts, nut butters, lean ground beef	Bacon, fried meats, sausage