

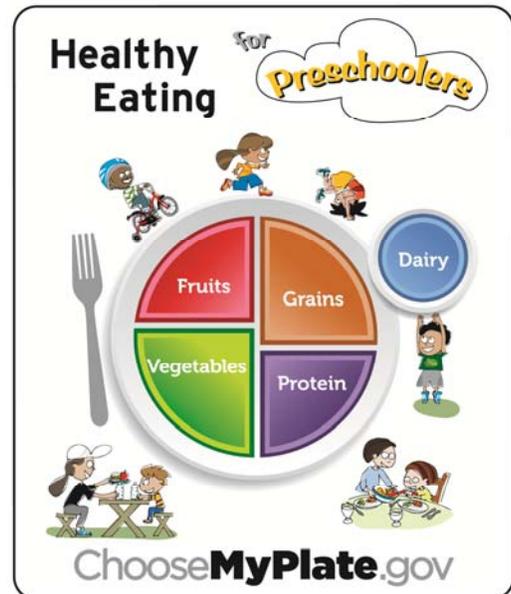
MyPlate for Preschoolers

How much does your child need to eat?

MyPlate shows us the five building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image – a place setting for a meal. To find out the recommended amount of food your preschooler needs based on, go to www.choosemyplate.gov or see the general tips on this sheet.

Tips for Feeding a Preschooler:

- **Breakfast.** Eating breakfast is important to help your child feel good, learn, have energy, and stay healthy. A healthy breakfast can be as simple as serving whole grain cereal that is low in sugar with low-fat milk or a bagel with peanut butter.
- **Picky eaters.** Young children don't always take to new foods right away. Offer new fruits and vegetables many times, served a variety of ways. Give your child just a taste at first and be patient with them.
- **Snacks.** Healthy snacks are important for preschoolers. It is difficult for them to get the nutrients they need to be healthy from just three meals. Offer healthy snacks between meals to help your child meet their nutritional needs. Choose healthy snacks for both you and your child. Eat fruits and vegetables and your kids will too!
- **Patience works better than pressure.** Offer your child new foods. Then, let them choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy a food when eating it is their own choice. It also helps them develop independence.
- **Let them learn by serving themselves.** Let your child serve themselves at dinner. Teach them to take small amounts at first. Assure them they can get more if they're still hungry.
- **Enjoy each other while enjoying family meals.** Keep meal time relaxed to nourish the body and help your family make stronger connections. Let your little ones select which foods to put on their plates and how much to eat from the healthy choices you provide.
- **Offer only one new food at a time.** Serve something that you know your child likes along with the new food. Offering too many new foods at once can be overwhelming to a child.



Know how. Know **now.**

Keep them moving:

- **Play together:** Make physical activity fun for the whole family. Involve your child in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child. Playing together strengthens family relationships and helps your child learn good habits.
- **Moving more is healthy:** It gives your child energy, helps maintain a healthy weight, and helps lower the risk of developing some health problems. Two hours or less of television or computer screen time is recommended.
- **Move more:** Try to fit at least 60 minutes of physical activity into your child's day. If you move more, your child will too.



The Food Groups

Grain Group: "Make at least half your grains whole grains."

Most preschoolers need 3-5 ounces of foods from the grain group each day. 1 ounce is equal to:

- 1 slice of regular sized bread
- 1 cup dry cereal or 1¼ cup puffed dry cereal
- ½ cup cooked cereal, pasta, or rice
- 1 small tortilla

Vegetable Group: "Make half your plate fruits and vegetables."

Most preschoolers need 1-2 cups of foods from the vegetable group each day. ½ cup is equal to:

- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables
- ½ cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables
- ½ cup 100% vegetable juice

Fruit Group: "Make half your plate fruits and vegetables."

Limit intake of juices due to high sugar content and lack of fiber. Choose whole fruits more often. Most preschoolers need 1-1½ cups of foods from the fruit group each day. ½ cup is equal to:

- ½ cup 100% fruit juice. Children should consume no more than 4-6 ounces (about ½ cup) of juice per day.
- ½ small apple, ½ medium pear
- ½ cup chopped or canned fruit
- ¼ cup dried fruit

Dairy Group: "Switch to low-fat or fat-free milk."

Most preschoolers need 2½ cups of foods or drinks from the dairy group each day. 1 cup is equal to:

- 8 ounces of milk or yogurt
- 1½ ounces natural cheese like cheddar
- 2 ounces processed cheese like American cheese

Protein Group: "Go lean with protein."

Most preschoolers need 2-5 ounces of foods from the protein group each day. 1 ounce is equal to:

- 1 ounce lean meat, fish, or poultry
- ½ ounce nuts or seeds
- ¼ cup cooked beans or peas
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

Sources:

www.choosemyplate.gov

USDA Core Nutrition Messages - <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/Files/ChildFeedingMessages.pdf>