

MyPyramid for Preschoolers

How much does your child need to eat?

MyPyramid for Preschoolers tell us how much food preschoolers should eat from each food group based on their age, sex, and physical activity level. To find out the recommended amount of food your preschooler needs based on MyPyramid, go to www.MyPyramid.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 are often picky about eating. Be patient. Foods should be introduced ten times before a child decides they do not like the food. Handling picky eating in a positive way will help your child grow up with good food habits.
- **Snacks:** Snacks provide important nutrients and energy your child needs to grow and stay healthy. Your child learns snacking habits by watching what you eat. 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.
- **Eat together whenever possible:** Let your kids see you enjoying healthy foods such as fruits, veggies, and **whole** grains at meals and snacks at home and on the go.
- **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:** Allow time for physical activity and safe play as a regular part of your child's day. Playing together also strengthens family relationships.
- **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 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: "Choose dark green and orange veggies."

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

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

Fruit Group: "Focus on fruits."

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. 1 cup is equal to:

- 1 cup 100% fruit juice. Children should consume no more than 4-6 ounces (about ½ cup) of juice per day.
- 1 small apple, 1 medium pear
- 1 cup chopped or canned fruit
- ½ cup dried fruit

Milk Group: "Choose low-fat or fat-free milk products."

Most preschoolers need 2 cups of foods or drinks from the milk 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

Meat and Beans Group: Most preschoolers need 2-5 ounces of foods from the meat and beans group each day. 1 ounce is equal to:

- 1 ounce lean meat, fish, or poultry
- ½ ounce nuts or seeds
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter