

Setting the Table for Meals Together

The following module will present information on the importance of eating meals together. It will describe the benefits of eating meals together, including: the nutritional benefits of eating meals together, how to develop a routine to eat meals together, tips for handling the choosy eater; and techniques to engage children in eating meals together.



Eating Together

Sharing meal time together provides a sense of family. Parents have the opportunity to share family values, culture and ethnic heritage. Children have the opportunity to learn. The food served reinforces cultural and ethnic learning.



Eating moose, fish, or other traditional foods places value on those foods and provides the perfect opportunity to share stories about adventures in hunting, catching, gathering and preparing the foods. Serving foods that reflect your family's culture such as traditional Alaska Native, Mexican, Asian, or Pacific Islander is a perfect way to instill cultural and ethnic heritage in children.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, CASA, at Columbia University surveyed teenage children and parents. CASA reported that both parents and children noted that regular meals eaten together enabled healthy communication, increased daily family connections and enabled parents to monitor their children's moods, behaviors and whereabouts.¹ Children growing up eating meals with their parents on a regular basis may communicate better in the adolescent years.



It is not surprising that mealtime conversations increase children's vocabularies. Mealtimes present opportunities for children and parents to engage in lively discussion which include stories about past events, plans for the future and explanations of how the world works. In addition, meal times provide the time to talk about food, nutrition and healthy eating. The words used in these types of conversations are not usually found in children's storybooks. Increasing a child's vocabulary improves reading and writing skills.



FIGURE 4a: Percentage of Teens Who Get Mostly A's and B's in school¹

TABLE TALK

MORE ABOUT FAMILY

www.casacolumbia.org/Absolutenm/articlefiles/380-2005_family_dinners_ii_final.pdf

Mealtime conversations have been shown to generate a larger amount of sophisticated word usage than other activities such as toy play or storybook reading.² Improved child vocabulary outcomes were most strongly connected to mealtime conversations and information book reading.³



Research has shown that eating meals together serves as a “protective factor” in the lives of teens. Eating meals together increases teenagers’ well-being and decreases teenagers risk of drug and alcohol use. Research shows that children who eat dinner together have better social skills and the more dinners teens reported eating together with their family, the better their grades.¹ See figure 4a.

Setting the table and eating together when children are toddlers and preschoolers will help establish a dinner routine that can be continued when the children become teens.



Children learn by watching adults. Therefore, it is important that adults encourage and model healthy eating and behaviors. Adults should sit with children at the table, eat the same or similar foods as the children and enjoy the foods they are eating by talking about how food is good for the body.

Adults should help children select moderate portion sizes, encourage children to taste new foods and let children know it is OK to stop eating when they feel full. If children see adults eating fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods they will also choose to eat those healthy foods.



Meals Together = Healthier Diet

Project EAT findings suggest children who eat meals as a family have a healthier diet, including an increase in fruit and vegetable intake. Eating fruits and vegetables is a great way for children to get the nutrients they need to be healthy and grow strong.

High fruit and vegetable intakes have been shown to decrease the risk of many diseases including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Experts recommend preschoolers eat 2½–3½ cups (5–7 servings) of fruits and vegetables each day. Children who eat fruits and vegetables are likely to continue eating them for a lifetime.

THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/index.htm

THE 2005 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

www.5aday.org/pdfs/research/health_benefits.pdf

MORE MATTERS

PROJECT EAT

The University of Minnesota conducts Project EAT: Eating Among Teens. Project EAT is designed to investigate the factors influencing eating habits of adolescents, to determine if youth are meeting national dietary recommendations and to explore dieting and physical activity patterns among youth. Project EAT studied the frequency of family meals and associations with dietary intake in 4,746 middle and high school students. As the number of family meals per week went up consumption of fruits, vegetables, grains and calcium-rich foods increased, while soft drink consumption went down. Protein, energy, calcium, iron, folate, fiber and vitamin A, C, E and B6 consumption also increased as the number of family meals increased.⁴

In a comparison of children aged 9-14 who ate family dinners most days to those who ate family dinners never or only a few days a week, children who ate meals together more often had a more healthful diet, including more fruits and vegetables, less fried food, less soft drinks; less saturated and trans fat; and more fiber, calcium, folate, iron and vitamins.⁵ These studies suggest that the presence of family meals in an adolescent’s life results in a more healthful eating pattern.

The research regarding the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables shows a connection between fruit and vegetable consumption and disease prevention. Fruits and vegetables are complex foods and provide a variety of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytonutrients, fiber and some nutrients which have not even been researched. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals eat 5–11 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a range of 2½–6½ cups (5–13 servings) of fruits and vegetables each day. The guidelines also recommend choosing from all five vegetable subgroups: dark green, orange, legumes (beans), starchy vegetables and others. Since preschoolers need fewer calories than adults, the recommendation is 2½–3½ cups (5–7 servings) of fruits and vegetables each day. It is clear that the scientific community agrees that more matters when eating fruits and vegetables.

Studies suggest that the presence of family meals results in increased calcium intake. Calcium is a mineral that is needed for building healthy, strong, bones and teeth. It is important that children get enough calcium everyday to build bone strength and prevent bone disease such as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis results in brittle bones that break easily. Bone diseases usually afflict older adults but may be prevented by adequate calcium intake during the growing years.



In Southeast Alaska, good calcium sources include all canned salmon, leather chiton, ribbon seaweed, beach asparagus and kelp with herring eggs.⁶ In the Yukon Kuskokwim–Delta region calcium-rich foods include all canned salmon, blackfish, needlefish, bone marrow, fish head soup, smelt, tomcod and whitefish liver.⁷



Studies suggest that the presence of family meals results in children drinking less soda pop and eating less fried food.⁵ Meals eaten at home generally include fewer fried foods than meals eaten away from home; thus children will consume less fat and saturated fat. Soda pop has no nutrients, just calories. Soda pop also contains a great deal of sugar that can cause cavities. For these reasons, nutritionists recommend that preschoolers avoid soda pop.

Choosy Eaters



Preschool-age children go through a normal developmental phase called “neophobia,” or fear of new things, such as new foods. This stage is mistakenly called “picky eater” or “choosy eater.” To help preschoolers overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods, a variety of foods should be consistently offered to preschool children. This will eventually lead to more healthful eating habits.⁸

And, just like children overcome their fear of going down the slide at the playground, they will also overcome their fear of new foods.

Food jags in children (when children only want to eat one food) are common. Food jags rarely last long enough to be harmful. Children who are energetic and growing are probably eating enough. The strategies for addressing choosy eaters can also be used to get children through the food jag phase.



Even though it may be frustrating, repeatedly offer healthy foods to children, even foods that have been rejected before. Research by childhood nutrition experts shows that it can take up to a dozen times before a food becomes familiar to a child. So, continue to offer a variety of healthy foods to preschoolers to help overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods. The more times the food is introduced the more likely the food will become familiar.

Encourage children to try each food. Do not talk about what a choosy eater a child is in front of the child. Children believe and become what their parents and caregivers say. Children benefit when parents praise them for their accomplishments and are patient and understanding.

Preschoolers should eat 2–3 servings of low-fat dairy each day plus eat a variety of other calcium rich foods. The best sources of calcium are dairy products such as low fat milk, cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese. However, dark green leafy vegetables, canned salmon and small fish with edible bones are also good calcium sources.



GOT CALCIUM?
SUGAR-FREE

Cavity Free Kids is an oral health curriculum for Head Start programs with many classroom and parent education units that discuss sugar.

Calcium is a mineral that the body needs for numerous functions, including building and maintaining bones and teeth, blood clotting, sending nerve impulses and regulating the heart's rhythm. Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) give recommendations on how much calcium should be consumed each day. For 1–3 year olds, 500 milligrams of calcium a day is recommended. The recommendation for 4–8 year olds is 800 milligrams of calcium a day.

One cup low-fat milk has about 300 milligrams of calcium, eight ounces of yogurt has about 275 milligrams and three ounces of canned salmon has 180 milligrams. Therefore, preschool aged children should eat 2–3 servings of dairy each day plus a variety of other calcium rich foods.

When dealing with a food jag, serve a small serving of the favored food along with healthy foods. This way the child still gets his or her favored food but may be hungry enough to eat something else too. When introducing a child to a new food, serve one- or two- tablespoon portions. This way the child will not feel overwhelmed by the food. Don't give up!

Research conducted through the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Colorado State University has noted that children need up to eight to twelve exposures to a food before they will try it willingly.



Allow children to explore and taste foods. It may seem like children play with their food but children may just be exploring. Children will smell food, examine its texture, look at it and eventually taste! Do not rush children to eat. Trying new foods takes time. Do not use food to reward, bribe or punish children. Children will learn that food jags and refusal to eat foods gives them control.

Scheduling Mealtime

Just like most things in life that get done, make eating together a priority on a regular basis. Although dinner or breakfast is the most likely meal of choice, lunch could be the selected meal depending on family schedules.

Families should think about how many meals a week they are eating together. With a little effort most families should be able to add one more to the list. One meal together is better than none, six meals together are better than five. Set a meal schedule of which meals will be eaten together, establish a time and who is responsible for planning, cooking and organizing the meal.

Once the schedule is set, require that permission is received for absence from meals to help establish the value of eating together. Attempt to re-schedule the meal before allowing the absence.

Even the best set plans encounter conflict. Being flexible with mealtime or location will increase the chances of eating together. If adults or older children have events or a meeting to attend, adjust the meal time. Eat your meal together a little earlier or later than planned. Toddlers and preschoolers may need a healthy snack if meal-times are later than usual.

For example, the family could eat a meal together picnic style before a play or sporting event. Pack a picnic of sandwiches and cold salads!



Sometimes children will not be interested in eating together. They will say they are not hungry and

do not want to eat because they would rather play with toys, the pet, or friends. However, to maintain consistency in the family or children's life, children should participate in mealtime even if they choose not to eat.

It is also important to consistently reinforce meal time behavior. Behaviors that can be reinforced include using the words "please" and "thank you," requesting permission before leaving the table and taking dishes to the sink.

Planning, cooking and organizing meals does not need to be one person's responsibility. Determining the division of responsibility helps all family members feel they have an important role in the meal. Today, most people feel short on time, so keep mealtime preparations simple, easy and nutritious.

Share meal tasks such as preparation and cooking with all family members. Children of all ages can help plan and shop for meals. Involve children in meal tasks from planning, preparations and cooking. Even toddlers and preschoolers can help in meal planning and preparation.



FOSTERING GOOD HABITS



Teachers and caregivers can help children overcome their choosy eating by allowing them to explore and taste new foods. With the rise in childhood overweight, it is important that we establish healthful eating habits early in life. The preschool years are a critical time to introduce and encourage healthy nutrition because early exposure to healthful foods helps children establish good eating habits that carry into adulthood.⁹

Children establish food preferences and dietary habits during the first six years of life.⁹ Additionally, children's eating behaviors, food preferences and willingness to try new foods are influenced by the people around them. Parents and other caregivers influence children's eating practices in several ways. They control availability and accessibility of foods, determine how and when meals are served, model eating behaviors and establish good manners and etiquette around food.^{10, 11} Thus, it is important to educate teachers about nutrition and share practical strategies for encouraging preschoolers to try new foods.

Involve Children

Having toddlers and preschoolers help with meal preparation will help raise their interest in the foods that are served, will provide practice of fine motor skills and will provide time for interaction with other family members. Toddlers can carry unbreakable dishes to the table, wash fruits and vegetables and wipe down the table top.

Children feel important when they are given tasks so let children help even if working alone is faster. Children and parents working together in the kitchen allows for bonding time and lets children practice skills.

Preschoolers will be able to mix or stir foods, make sandwiches, spread soft spreads, tear lettuce, help to pour and measure and set the table. Ask your child what he or she would like to do to help you. Children will come up their own ideas from picking flowers to making placemats for the table.



Engage Children

Once a meal time schedule is set and the meal is cooked, strive to make meal times pleasurable, enjoyable and engaging for children. Create a relaxed setting for meals by removing non-food items from the table, even if things are just set on the floor temporarily, by turning off the TV, setting a policy about not answering the phone during meal time and putting pets outside or in another room.

Before sitting down for a meal, give a five-minute warning and ensure everyone washes his or her hands!

Serve food that children can eat without help. Toddlers and preschoolers will be at different ability levels. They do not require different foods, just food in a different form. Children will also benefit from child size or smaller size forks, spoons and knives. Place foods into easy to lift containers and allow children to serve themselves. This will improve fine motor skills, reinforce self-efficacy and allow children to self-regulate portion sizes.



Toddlers will be able to hold a cup by the handle, pour liquids from a small pitcher, use a fork and chew most foods. Toddlers generally need an adult or older sibling to cut up foods such as meat and vegetables into bite-size pieces.

Preschoolers will likely be able to use a knife and fork, drink from a cup and have an increased ability to feed themselves. Preschoolers may be able to cut up some foods but may still require help for meat and tougher foods.

Eating meals together means that adults and children sit and eat together. Eating and talking with children during mealtime allows adults to model good eating behaviors and provides opportunities to talk about food tradition and cultures. Talking about the texture, taste and color of foods allows children to explore all five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing) right at the dinner table!

During the meal, set a good example with respect, listening and patience. Talk about events, news and funny things that happened during the day or week.

Sometimes having ideas for conversation starters and games helps engage children in mealtime discussions. Have each family member bring an object to the table and talk about it, just like show and tell in school. Tell stories about pictures in an old family photo. Pick events and family members from the past who younger family members might not know.





TONGUE TWISTERS TO TWY

Yellow butter, purple jelly, red jam, black bread. Spread it thick, say it quick!
Yellow butter, purple jelly, red jam, black bread. Spread it thicker, say it quicker!
Yellow butter, purple jelly, red jam, black bread. Don't eat with your mouth full!

Chester Cheetah chews a chunk of cheap cheddar cheese. Bake big batches of bitter brown bread.

Play word and memory games. For example, in the Food Alphabet game, one person names a food and the next person names a food that begins with the last letter of the first food's name. Preschoolers will need help with this game. To include them, they could start each round by naming a food.

Fill a container with questions. Pick out a question and have everyone answer it. Add some imaginary questions and "what if" questions to spice up the conversation. Play Simon says at the table. This may work to get a child to try a new food!



After the meal team up for fast clean-up. Take turns selecting the music for easier cleanup. Allow the lead cleanup person to play the music. Preschoolers will be able to help clear the table, dry dishes, place some dishes in the bottom rack of the dishwasher and wipe the table clean. Children learn teamwork skills by helping with family chores.

MODULE FOUR REFERENCES

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Making Healthy Food Choices

SLIDE
2
MODULE
FIVE

Parents want to do what is best for their child. Parents protect children from unintentional injuries by strapping their children into car seats, fitting them with bike helmets, storing poisons out of reach, installing safety locks on drawers and locking up their guns. Parents also protect children from infectious diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella by immunizing their children. The “how to” of protecting children from unintentional injuries and infectious diseases is clear to parents and the benefits are valued. Parents value the benefits of serving children healthy food but the “how to” is often less clear.

This module will give parents information on “how to” select healthy food to improve health and prevent excess weight gain. First, the module will reinforce to parents why serving healthy foods to children is important. This will be followed by an explanation of selecting healthy food based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid. There will be shopping tips, including information on reading the food label and advice about using sales, coupons and unit prices to stretch food dollars. Parents will be given information on planning meals by making a shopping list, purchasing in bulk and menu planning. Lastly, a review of how to select healthy food will be provided.

SLIDE
3
MODULE
FIVE

Providing healthy food to preschoolers during the formative years is important in helping them establish healthy food preferences, habits and portion control. Good nutrition also results in healthy growth and prevents children from excessive weight gain.

It seems simple enough to set children up for a lifetime of good health by introducing preschoolers to a variety of nutritious foods, providing meals on a regular schedule and eating meals together. However, parents are flooded with nutrition messages every day through marketing at the grocery store, in the newspaper, in magazines and on television. These nutrition messages are often conflicting, sometimes complicated and difficult to translate into useful information. The material in this section is designed to provide accurate, useful information that parents can use to make healthy food choices for preschoolers.

Healthy Weight

It is important to understand the health risks associated with children being overweight. Overweight and at-risk-for-overweight children have an increased risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, joint disorders, Type 2 diabetes, psychosocial disorders, social discrimination and becoming obese as an adult. These diseases in adults can increase the risk for early death, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, gallbladder disease and certain types of cancer.¹ (Figure 5a). Healthy eating can reduce the risk of children becoming overweight.

SLIDE
4
MODULE
FIVE

FIGURE 5a: Health Risks of Overweight Children

Overweight children are at increased risk for:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Joint disorders
- Type 2 diabetes
- Psychosocial disorders
- Social discrimination
- Adult obesity

For more information on childhood overweight see module one. The remaining material in this module will focus on helping children develop healthy eating habits in their preschool years.

HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR FAMILY

Head Start Performance Standards require that grantee and delegate agencies address nutrition elements in their programs. The information in this module will help agencies comply with Performance Standard 1304.23 (d), which states that, “Parent education activities must include opportunities to assist families with food preparation and nutritional skills.” It will also facilitate compliance with Performance Standards 1304.40 (f)(3)(i)&(ii), which require that “Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that the nutrition education program includes, at a minimum: (i) Nutrition education in the selection and preparation of foods to meet family needs and in the management of food budgets; and (ii) Parent discussions with program staff about the nutritional status of their child.”

Dietary Guidelines

The nutrition recommendations in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are co-published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Dietary Guidelines provide science-based nutrition recommendations for the general American public age 2 years and older. To make the Dietary Guidelines easier to understand, the USDA designed MyPyramid (Figure 5b).



FIGURE 5b
USDA MyPyramid

Although the Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid make national nutrition recommendations, other organizations make specific disease prevention recommendations. For example the American Heart Association has a dietary recommendation that adults eat two servings of fish a week to prevent heart disease.² The Produce for Better Health Foundation recommends a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day.³



2005 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS
healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines
MyPyramid.com

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends delaying the introduction of 100% percent juice until at least 6 months of age and limiting to no more than 4–6 ounces of 100 percent juice each day served from a cup.⁴ Additional dietary recommendation will be shared while introducing MyPyramid.

MyPyramid sorts similar foods into six food groups and provides advice about selecting foods. The six MyPyramid food groups are: (1) Grains; (2) Milk; (3) Meat and Beans; (4) Oils (5) Vegetables; and (6) Fruit. These categories will be explained in the next sections.



Eat Whole Grains

MyPyramid recommends preschool aged children eat 3–5 ounce equivalents of grain each day.



MyPyramid grains group foods are pilot bread, rice, bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals and tortillas. In general, one slice of bread, one cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as one-ounce equivalent from the grains group (Figure 5c).

FIGURE 5c: Grain Servings Sizes

1 ounce of grain equivalent =	
1 slice	whole grain bread
1 cup	ready-to-eat cereal
½ cup	cooked rice
½ cup	cooked pasta
½ cup	cooked cereal

The Dietary Guidelines state that at least half of all the grains eaten should be whole grains. Whole grains are high in nutrition and fiber. Eating foods rich in fiber as part of a healthy diet reduces the risk of heart disease, may reduce constipation and may help with weight management. Fiber rich whole grains help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Selecting whole grains foods can be accomplished by reading labels and ingredient lists.

WHOLE VS. REFINED

Grains are divided into two subgroups, whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel; the bran, germ and endosperm. Examples include whole wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal and brown rice. Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are white flour, degermed cornmeal, white bread and white rice.

Eat Lean Meat and More Beans

The foods in the MyPyramid Meat and Bean food group are together because they supply similar nutrients such as protein and B-vitamins. Foods include poultry, game birds, game meat, beef, pork, lamb and veal as well as eggs, beans, peas and nuts. Turkey, chicken and game birds, such as ptarmigan and duck, are a good source of protein. Game meat, such as moose, caribou and deer are a good source of lean protein that preschoolers enjoy. Fish and sea mammals are also part of the Meat and Bean food group.

the nutrition that non-processed meats offer. Examples of these meats are: chicken nuggets, bologna, corn dogs, frankfurters, hot dogs and many luncheon meats.

Meat and poultry should be prepared using low fat methods such as trimming all visible fat and removing skin. Cook meat and poultry by broiling, poaching, roasting, stewing, steaming, stir frying, or using the crock pot.

The MyPyramid Meat and Bean food group includes fish and sea mammals. Salmon, halibut, whitefish, herring and all locally caught fish are all low in fat, great sources of heart healthy fatty acids and high in nutrition. Sea mammals, such as sea lion, whale and seal are rich in nutrients and are healthy food choices in Alaska. Fish is an important part of a healthy diet for everyone, including young children.

Many parents have heard about high mercury levels in fish and are cautious about serving it to their children. The state of Alaska will soon publish up-to-date consumption guidelines for young children and women of childbearing age. These guidelines offer suggestions specific to each type and size of fish. Good news! All five species of Alaska wild salmon have very low mercury levels.

Parents will be able to access the new guidelines on the State of Alaska, Division of Public Health web site or by calling 907-269-8000.

ALASKA FISH CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

THE NUTRITION FACTS LABEL: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME AND MY KIDS?
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

Consumers must read labels when selecting whole grain products. Color is not an indication of a whole grain food. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Also, foods marketed as multi-grain, stone-ground, 100 percent wheat, cracked wheat, seven-grain, or bran may not be whole grain. Reading the ingredient list on the package is the only way to know if a food is whole grain.



To eat whole grain foods, select cereals, breads and pasta products that list brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, or wild rice as one of the first three ingredients. The ingredients are listed in the order of quantity. If a whole grain ingredient is listed first, second or even third, it is most likely a whole grain food. The Nutrition Facts label can help too. Foods with a higher percent Daily Value for fiber are more likely whole grains foods (Figure 5d).

In restaurants, eat whole grains by asking for brown rice instead of steamed rice, whole grain pizza crust instead of white, or whole grain toast instead of sourdough. Some restaurants may not have whole grains currently available but will begin to offer whole grains if enough customers make the request.



FIGURE 5d: Nutrition Facts Showing Percent Daily Value of Fiber

The Dietary Guidelines recommend selecting meat and poultry that are lean, low fat, or fat free. Many common meats are high in fat, salt and lack

CEREAL FLAKES

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3/4 Cup (27g)	
Servings Per Container 10	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 5
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat .5g	
Saturated Fat 0g	0
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0
Sodium 190mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	12%
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.



It is important that children get enough calcium everyday to build bone strength or density to prevent bone disease such as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis results in brittle bones that break easily. It usually afflicts older adults but may be prevented by adequate calcium intake during the growing years.

To ensure adequate calcium intake, the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for 1–3 year olds is 500 milligrams of calcium a day and is 800 milligrams of calcium a day for 4–8 year olds.⁷ This amount translates into 2–3 servings of calcium rich dairy each day plus a variety of other calcium rich foods. The calcium RDI for adults is higher. One cup low-fat milk has about 300 milligrams of calcium, eight ounces of low fat yogurt has about 275 milligrams and three ounces of canned salmon has 180 milligrams.

Beans, peas and nuts are good source of low-fat and affordable protein. Examples of beans and peas are black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, mature lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas, tofu, white beans and peanut butter. Peanuts are not truly a nut and are actually more closely related to beans than nuts.



Nuts and nut butters made from almonds, walnuts, macadamia, pecans and hazelnuts are also in the Meat and Bean food group.

BEANS: VEGGIE OR MEAT

Many Women Infant and Children (WIC) food packages or coupons allow the purchase of dried beans. Beans provide a great low fat, high fiber, delicious and nutritious meal when made into soups, salads and casseroles, or when served as a side dish. Cooking with dried beans takes planning as they cook fastest after being soaked in water for eight or more hours. Beans put to soak in the morning before the school day starts will be ready to cook for a healthy dinner.

GOT CALCIUM?

All fluid milk products and foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group, while foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream and butter, are not. Whole and 2% milk are among the biggest contributors of saturated fat to Americans' diets. Therefore, experts recommend serving non-fat (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk to children after the age of 2.

Lactose intolerance is the inability to digest significant amounts of lactose, the major sugar found in milk. Lactose intolerance is caused by a shortage of the enzyme lactase, which is produced by the cells that line the small intestine. Lactase breaks down milk sugar into two simpler forms of sugar called glucose and galactose, which are then absorbed into the bloodstream.

People who do not have enough lactase to digest the amount of lactose they consume may feel very uncomfortable when they digest milk products. Common symptoms, which range from mild to severe, include nausea, cramps, bloating, gas and diarrhea. Symptoms begin about 30 minutes to 2 hours after eating or drinking foods containing lactose. The severity of symptoms depends on many factors, including the amount of lactose a person can tolerate and a person's age, ethnicity and digestion rate.



Dry beans and peas fall into both the MyPyramid Vegetables food group and the Meat and Beans food groups. Generally, individuals who regularly eat meat, poultry and fish would count dry beans and peas as vegetables. Individuals who seldom eat meat, poultry, or fish (vegetarians) would count some of the dry beans and peas they eat as a meat.

Low Fat Dairy after Two



Fluid milk, yogurt, cheese and cottage cheese are in the milk food group because they provide similar nutrients. Select fat free or low fat milk and dairy foods for your child after age two. Low fat milk is also called 1%. Fat free milk is called non fat or skim. Reduced fat milk is 2% milk and is not low fat.

Milk and dairy foods provide calcium for strong bones and teeth, protein to build muscles and vitamins A and D for healthy growth. MyPyramid recommends preschool aged children eat 2–3 servings of low-fat dairy each day plus eat a variety of other calcium rich foods. The best sources of calcium are dairy products such as low fat milk, cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese. Reconstituted milk from powdered milk is available in non-fat and low-fat varieties and is nutritionally equal to fluid milk. Dark green leafy vegetables, canned salmon and small fish with edible bones are also good calcium sources.



In Alaska, good calcium sources also include all canned salmon, leather chiton, ribbon seaweed, beach asparagus, kelp with herring eggs,⁵ blackfish, needlefish, bone marrow, fish head soup, smelt, tom cod and whitefish liver.⁶

Some children are unable to drink cow's milk because of lactose intolerance. These children cannot digest the sugar found in milk and foods made with milk. Lactose intolerance should be diagnosed by a health-care provider because its symptoms can be confused with those of other illnesses. Children with lactose intolerance need to eat other calcium rich foods everyday to get the calcium needed for good health.

LACKING LACTOSE

If your child has been diagnosed with lactose intolerance by a health-care provider, offer calcium-rich foods such as lactose-free milk, calcium-fortified soy milk, canned salmon with bones, sardines, collard greens, turnip greens, broccoli and tofu. Some people with lactose intolerance can eat cheese and yogurt because these foods have less lactose. Yogurt, for example, has all of milk's nutrients, but less lactose.



Lactose intolerance can be hard to diagnose based on symptoms alone. People sometimes think they suffer from lactose intolerance because they have the symptoms associated with the disorder, not knowing other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome can cause similar symptoms. A doctor can use tests to diagnose lactose intolerance.

Some causes of lactose intolerance are well-known. Primary lactase deficiency is a condition that develops over time. After about age 2 the body begins to produce less lactase, though most people will not notice symptoms until they are much older. Researchers have identified a genetic link for primary lactose intolerance. Secondary lactase deficiency occurs when injury to the small intestine or certain digestive diseases reduce the amount of lactase a person produces. These diseases include celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and Crohn's disease.

Oils

The familiar food term, oils, is used to describe one MyPyramid food group. Those oils are part of other foods such as peanut butter, sunflower seeds, nuts, olives, most Alaska fish, avocados, salad dressing, vegetable cooking oils and products made with vegetable oils such as mayonnaise. If nuts are served, they should be chopped or ground because of the choking hazard associated with whole nuts.



In addition to MyPyramid and 5-A-Day recommendations, the Produce for Better Health Foundation recently introduced messages around eating “the color way.” These messages encourage eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. In March of 2007, the CDC launched a new fruit and vegetables campaign. Its message encourages people to eat more fruits and vegetables every day.



The bottom line of all these messages is that fruits and vegetables are good for children and adults. Fruits and vegetables help prevent disease, maintain a healthy weight, support a healthy digestive system and provided the nutrients necessary for children to grow healthy and strong. It is clear the scientific community agrees that more matters when eating fruits and vegetables.

MyPyramid recommends preschool aged children eat 1–1½ cups (2–3 servings) of vegetables every day. In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or 1 cup of raw leafy greens can be considered 1 cup or 2 servings from the vegetable group.



Preschoolers can easily get 1½ cups (3 servings) of vegetables in a day by eating a ½ ear of steamed corn for lunch, munching on ½ cup carrots and celery sticks as an after school snack and eating moose stew made with vegetables or ½ cup mashed sweet potato for dinner (Figure 5e).

All vegetables, dried beans and peas are a member of the vegetable food group. Vegetables may be canned, frozen or fresh served raw or cooked, dried and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed. Essentially all vegetables are very low in fat and calories. Cook vegetables by steaming, sautéing, roasting, baking, or adding directly to stews, casseroles and tomato sauces.

Active Play

The picture of the person climbing the stairs on the side of the MyPyramid is meant to encourage activity every day. For children activity is active play. To find out more about activities for preschool children, please see the physical activity modules in this training manual.



Eat More Colorful Fruits and Veggies

Learning about fruits and vegetables can be confusing for consumers because of the many existing fruit and vegetable messages. Often fruits and vegetables are grouped together. However, MyPyramid has them in two different food groups. The 1992 Food Pyramid and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend “servings” of fruits and vegetables whereas MyPyramid recommends “cups” of fruit and vegetables. The national 5-A-Day campaign initially recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Later, the campaign began recommending five–nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

FIGURE 5e: Example of Three Servings of Vegetables

Preschooler Eats Three Vegetables Servings Each Day!

½ ear steamed corn for lunch

½ cup carrots and celery sticks as an after school snack

Moose stew made with vegetables for dinner

MYPYRAMID FOR CHILDREN
mypyramid.gov/kids/

MyPyramid organizes vegetables into five subgroups based on their nutrient content. Produce for Better Health organizes vegetables and fruits into five groups by color. Color is an indicator of nutrient content. Both categorizations are scientifically sound but cause consumers to hear several messages about vegetables. However, all health professionals believe that it's important to eat fruits and vegetables.

FIGURE 5f: Example of Three Servings of Fruit

Fruit has its own MyPyramid food group. All canned, frozen, dried, or fresh fruit served raw or cooked are members of the Fruit food group. MyPyramid recommends preschoolers eat 1–1½ cups (2–3 servings) of fruit a day. All fruits are very low in fat and calories.

Alaska parents can help children eat more fruit by serving fresh, canned and frozen fruit to their children as a snack. Parents can easily add dried, fresh, or canned fruit to breakfast cereals or make peanut butter sandwiches with bananas, raisins, or dried blueberries instead of jam. Parents should purchase canned fruit in water or its own juice instead of heavy syrup. Children eating dried fruit should always brush their teeth afterwards to prevent cavities.

A preschooler can easily eat the recommended amount of fruit each day. He would be served ¼ cup dried raisins (counts as ½ cup) added to oatmeal, ½ cup fruit cocktail canned in water for lunch and ½ a banana (counts as ½ cup) for a snack after school (Figure 5f).



MyPyramid mostly addresses foods by food groups. However, some nutrition recommendations can be applied to all foods. For example, the recommendation to choose foods low in fat applies to all foods. The next section will supplement the nutrition information from MyPyramid by presenting additional recommendations for good health.



Eating fruits and vegetables is a great way for children to get the nutrients they need to be healthy and grow strong. Research has shown that high fruit and vegetable intake decreases the risk of many diseases including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Fruits and vegetables are generally rich in vitamins and minerals and they pack fewer calories per bite than other foods. Fruits and vegetables help individuals maintain healthy weights because when they are eaten, other higher calorie foods are not. Children who eat fruits and vegetables are likely to continue eating them for a lifetime.

Preschooler Eats Three Fruit Servings Each Day!

- ¼ cup dried raisins (counts as ½ cup) added to oatmeal
- ½ cup fruit cocktail canned in water for lunch
- ½ banana (counts as ½ cup) for snack after school

In a survey of parents, more than ninety percent knew the correct amount of fruit and vegetables recommended for youngsters. Ninety-three percent of these parents agreed that eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and maintaining a healthy weight are important.⁸

The same parent survey found that despite parent knowledge and belief fewer than 5 percent of preschoolers ate the recommended three servings of vegetables every day. Children with low vegetable intake were at slightly increased risk of the being overweight.⁸

Another study showed that up to 23 percent of 7- to 24-month-olds did not eat any fruit in a given day.⁹

The Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS) found that parents reported french fries as the most commonly consumed vegetable of children 15–18 months old.⁹



However, french fries, potato chips, Tater Tots and hash browns do not count as a vegetable serving. Potatoes can only be considered a vegetable if little fat or sodium is added when cooking. Providing children with a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every single day is important to ensure proper growth and protection from disease.



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However, fruits and vegetables are not created equal. Various colors provide different nutrients. By serving a rainbow of fruits and vegetables throughout the week, children can eat their colors every day to keep them healthy and fit. Remember, canned, frozen and fresh all count toward eating your colors.

Serve children blue- and purple-colored fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, blackberries, huckleberries, purple cabbage, blackberries, purple grapes, plums, raisins, eggplant and purple fleshed potatoes for good health.

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Serve children dark green colored fruits and vegetables such as kelp with her-ring eggs, beach aspara-gus, black seaweed, young fireweed leaves, willow leaves, green apples, broccoli, avocados, green grapes, honeydew, kiwifruit, limes, green pears, artichokes, brussels sprouts, green beans, green cabbage, celery, cucumbers, leafy greens, lettuce, green onion, peas, green peppers, snow peas, sugar snap peas, spin-ach and zucchini for good health.

TURNING YOUR PLATE INTO A PALETTE

5aday.org/html/colorway/colorway_home.php
5aday.gov/benefits/index.html#

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Serve children white-colored fruits and vegetables such as bananas, pears, cauliflower, mushrooms, potatoes, turnips and white corn for good health.

Serve children yellow and orange-colored fruits and vegetables such as salm-on berries, oranges, carrots, yellow apples, apricots, cantaloupe, grape-fruit, lemon, mangoes, nectarines, peaches, pineapples, butternut squash, yellow and orange pep-pers, yellow potatoes, pumpkin, sweet corn and sweet potatoes for good health.

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Serve children red- and pink-colored fruits and vegetables such as high-bush cranberries, raspberries, grapefruit, red potatoes, red apples, cherries, red grapes, red pears, strawberries, watermelon, beets, red peppers, radishes, red onions, red potatoes, rhubarb and tomatoes for good health.

BLUE, GREEN, WHITE,
YELLOW AND RED

Sweetened Foods and Beverages

The Dietary Guidelines say to choose and prepare food and beverages with little added sugar. Sweetened fruit drinks such as soda pop, sports drinks or fruit punches are full of added sugar. A single 12-ounce can of soda provides the equivalent of 10 sugar cubes. There are many sweetened beverages on the market that claim to have health benefits such as hydration or energy. These products are also full of sugar. A 20-ounce energy beverage provides more than 20 sugar cubes (Figure 5g).

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Boosting the level of blue and purple fruits and vegetables in a low-fat diet may help maintain a lower risk of some cancers, improve urinary tract health, increase memory function and encourage healthy aging. Blue/purple fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of some health-promoting phytochemicals (plant chemicals) called anthocyanins and phenolics, currently being studied for their antioxidant and anti-aging benefits.

Adding green fruits and vegetables to a low-fat diet may help maintain a lower risk of some cancers, maintain vision health and grow strong bones and teeth. Green fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of potent phytochemicals called lutein and indoles, which interest researchers because of their potential antioxidant, health-promoting benefits.

Working white fruits and vegetables into a low-fat diet helps maintain heart health, maintain cholesterol levels that are already healthy and reduce the risk of some cancers. White, tan and brown fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of phytochemicals, including alicin, which is of interest to scientists.

Make yellow and orange fruits and vegetables a part of a low-fat diet to help maintain heart health, vision health, promote a healthy immune system and reduce the risk of some cancers. Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of antioxidants such as vitamin C as well as carotenoids and bioflavonoids, two classes of phytochemicals that scientists are studying for their health-promoting potential.

Be sure to include red in your low-fat diet to help maintain heart health, memory function, reduce the risk of some cancers and promote urinary tract health. The specific phytochemicals in the red group that are being studied for their health-promoting properties include lycopene and anthocyanins.

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, particularly carbonated soft drinks, may be a contributor to the epidemic of overweight and obesity. These sugar-sweetened beverages are high in added sugar content, do not provide a feeling of fullness and are usually consumed without thinking about the amount of calories. Only low-fat milk, water, or 4–6 ounces a day of 100 percent fruit juice should be served to preschoolers.

PREVENTING WEIGHT GAIN



FIGURE 5g: 19 Sugar Cubes in a 20 Ounce Soda

For children age 6 months to 6 years, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that consumption of 100 percent juice be limited to 4–6 ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) per day.⁴ Fruit juice offers no nutritional advantage over whole fruit. Whole canned, frozen, or fresh fruit are a better choice than juice because they have fiber and more nutrients. Whole fruit is low in calories, takes time to eat and helps provide the feeling of fullness. Juice is concentrated fruit that becomes high in sugar and does not provide a feeling of fullness. Serve children low-fat milk or water when they are thirsty and no more than 4–6 ounces of 100 percent juice a day. Any juice product with less than 100 percent juice should not be served at all.



Experts recommend limiting the intake of food and beverages sweetened with sugar. High sugar foods such as candy, chocolate bars, cakes, pies, ice cream, chocolate milk and pre-sweetened cereals such as frosted pops or sugared flakes should only be eaten every so often. Sweetened foods provide few nutrients, are generally high in fat, provide extra calories, may contribute to weight gain and can cause cavities in young children.

Sweetened Foods and Beverages

Many high-sugar foods are easy to identify because they taste sweet. However, sugar is often an ingredient added to many foods. To avoid additional sugar, one must read the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed in order of predominance by weight, that is, the ingredient that weighs the most is listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last. Sugar has many names, such as high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, brown sugar, invert sugar, corn sweetener, lactose, maltose, dextrose, malt syrup, fructose, molasses, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, sucrose, honey and syrup (Figure 5h).



Often several names for sugar are listed. For example, the second ingredient is sugar, the fourth ingredient is corn syrup and the sixth ingredient is brown sugar syrup. If these sugars were added together, there might be more sugar than the first ingredient in a product (Figure 5i).

FIGURE 5i: Hidden Sugar in an Ingredient List

Ingredients: Whole grain wheat, **sugar**, salt, **corn syrup**, canola and/or rice bran oil, **brown sugar syrup**, trisodium phosphate, natural flavor.

Ban Trans Fats

Trans fat was created by food manufacturers to make processed foods such as chips, crackers, cookies, chocolate and most snack foods. The use of trans fat is common in the frying oil of restaurants for cooking french fries, fried chicken and other fried menu items. Trans fats increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and may increase the risk of diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases. The Dietary Guidelines recommend keeping trans fat intake as low as possible.



FIGURE 5h: Sneaky Names for Sugar

High fructose corn syrup	Corn sweetener	Malt syrup	Glucose
Corn syrup	Lactose	Fructose	Sucrose
Brown sugar	Maltose	Molasses	Honey
Invert sugar	Dextrose	Fruit juice concentrates	Syrup

Scientists tried to determine if the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages causes weight gain. Thirty publications (15 cross-sectional, 10 prospective and five experimental) were reviewed. Although the authors noted that more research is needed, they also stated that the public should be discouraged from the consumption of sugary drinks in order to prevent weight gain.¹¹

Since January 2006, the amount of trans fat in a product must be listed on the Nutrition Facts label.

Parents can read the Nutrition Facts to avoid feeding their children foods made with trans fat (Figure 5j). Parents can also avoid ordering fried food from restaurants to stay away from trans fat.

WHY BAN TRANS FAT?

FIGURE 5j: Label showing Trans Fat

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 13g	20%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 0mg	10%
Sodium 660mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

A HISTORY LESSON

Just because a food is trans fat-free does not mean it is a healthy food choice.

Trans fat-free potato chips have the same amount of calories, overall fat and do not provide more nutrition than potato chips with trans fat. For example, two trans fat free cookies provide 160 calories, 14 grams of sugar, 60 calories from fat and have sugar listed as the first and fifth ingredients (Figure

LABELING TRANS FAT

www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2003/503_fats.html

FIGURE 5l: MyPyramid-based Shopping List

Grains: Whole grain cold cereal, whole wheat pasta noodles, whole grain bread

Milk: Non fat milk and yogurt, cheddar cheese

Meat & Beans: chicken breast, eggs, dried white beans

Vegetables: Canned Tomatoes, frozen broccoli

Fruit: Fresh apples or oranges, bananas, pears canned in water

For example, a family may write whole grain

breakfast cereal on the list. When selecting the cereal at the grocery store, the shopper would check to see if any cereals are on sale, compare unit prices, check ingredients and read the nutrition facts label. The shopper would purchase the cereal at the best price, with little sugar added, made with whole grains and higher in fiber.

Since most people purchase the same items every shopping trip, creating a master shopping list or keeping shopping lists and just adding items as needed will help save time planning and at the grocery store.

5k). So although these cookies have no trans fat, they are not healthy choices because they are high in fat, high in calories, high in sugar and low in nutrients.

FIGURE 5k: Ingredient List of Trans Fat Free Cookies

Ingredients: sugar, enriched flour, high olei, canola oil and/or palm oil and/or canola oil, cocoa (processed with alkali), **high fructose corn syrup**, baking soda, cornstarch, salt, soy lecithin (emulsifier), vanillin-an artificial flavor, chocolate.

Smart Shopping

Purchasing healthy foods that cost less is smart shopping. Planning for healthy meals and snacks helps parents serve healthier food, save money and save time spent preparing meals. The first steps in shopping are to make a menu plan and write a shopping list.

The MyPyramid nutrition recommendations can be used to make shopping lists and to help select food. A healthy shopping list will have foods from all food groups, which include grains, low fat milk, meat, beans and canned, frozen and fresh fruits and vegetables (Figure 5l). The shopping list does not have to be specific because some of the food decisions can be made at the store based on cost and label reading.

In the mid 1980's, the predominant fat sources in processed foods in the United States were animal fats, principally beef tallow and lard. When health professionals learned that highly-saturated animal fats were best avoided, the industry started making animal-fat free chips, crackers, cookies, frostings and spreads by using tropical oils. In the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, products on every supermarket shelf proclaimed in bold letters "no animal fats" but contained highly saturated tropical plant fats, which were soon determined to be unhealthy.

At that point, the food industry invented a new kind of fat and the result was "trans" fat. Trans fat was ushered in by food packages proclaiming "no tropical oils!" Trans fat refers to the shape of fatty acid molecules that contain a double bond between adjacent carbons. When the branches of a molecule on either side of that double bond stick out in the same direction, it is called a 'cis' fat; when they stick out in opposite directions, it is called a 'trans' fat. Cis fats predominate in nature. An industrial process called hydrogenization produces predominantly trans fat not found commonly in nature. Thus, "partially hydrogenated oil" on an ingredient list indicates the presence of trans fat.

The science is strong implicating trans fat in raising the risk of serious chronic disease. Trans fat has been shown to raise blood markers of inflammation, adversely affect blood lipid levels and damage the lining of blood vessels. Population studies suggest a strong link between trans fat intake and the risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer.¹²

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Shoppers can prevent purchase of non-healthy

foods by sticking to the list, not shopping when hungry and shopping without their children. Stores intentionally put many unhealthy foods that children like, such as candy and products with prizes, where kids can see and reach them.

There are many ways to save money when food shopping. Shopping smart means using discount coupons, comparing price tags, purchasing items with the lowest per unit price, selecting store brand food items and buying in bulk. Shopping smart also means buying foods that provide the best nutrition. Purchasing healthy food that costs less is smart shopping!

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For example, the generic brand of shredded wheat is significantly less expensive than the name brand shredded wheat and likely is very similar in ingredients, taste and nutrition. The generic brands are generally the least expensive choices.

Discount coupons can save money if the coupons do not result in the purchase of food items not needed. When cutting coupons only cut out what would be bought normally.

Another way to save money is to buy foods sold in bulk. The food sold in bulk bins is generally less expensive because little to no money was spent to market or package the item.

Comparing per-unit prices can help shoppers save money. The unit prices on the store shelves show the price per ounce, pound, quart, or other amount. Unit prices let you compare brands and sizes to get the best buy (Figure 5m). The unit price is especially helpful when comparing different sized containers.

Since the two 100% Orange Juice are the same except for the size of the container, the less expensive per unit choice would be the 96 ounce 100% Orange Juice.



Many villages and people in the state of Alaska do not have access to a grocery store or a fully stocked grocery store. People in these regions may consider placing large food orders several times a year.

Placing large food orders takes planning, consideration and a substantial outlay of money. Money will be saved in the long run, but purchasing several hundred dollars of food at once is difficult for most families. One way to save money on large food orders is to place the order with other families. Items that can only be purchased by the case can be shared among families and costs for shipping can be split. Placing large orders, especially with other families, takes a great deal of organization and planning, however each family involved will save money and have healthier food choices in the house.

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FIGURE 5m: Buy More, Save More

100% Orange Juice (96 oz.)

UNIT PRICE	YOU PAY
\$1³³	\$3⁹⁹
PER QUART	

100% Orange Juice (64 oz.)

UNIT PRICE	YOU PAY
\$1⁴⁸	\$2⁹⁶
PER QUART	

Nutrition Distilled

The recommendations for selecting good healthy foods for preschool aged children also apply to older children and adults. Making good food choices requires quite a bit of information about nutrition. For example, health professionals cannot just say “eat more whole grains” without explaining what whole grains are, why one should eat more whole grains and how to determine if a food is made from whole grains. Therefore, one nutrition recommendations requires a lot of additional information. The information presented has been distilled into the following summary.



- ☑ Choose whole grain food products most of the time.
 - ☑ Serve whole grain rice, bread, pasta and cereals. 
 - ☑ Look for whole grain ingredients listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
 - ☑ Choose foods with a Daily Value for fiber at 5% or more listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
- ☑ Serve lean cuts of meat.
 - ☑ Select fish from Alaskan waters more often.
 - ☑ Choose poultry more often. 
 - ☑ Prepare meat by baking, broiling, or poaching rather than by frying.
 - ☑ Limit the amount of high fat meats, such as bacon, sausage, or bologna, served.
 - ☑ Eat beans more often.
 - ☑ Limit the amount of fried or pre-fried meats or fish served.
- ☑ After the age of two, serve low-fat and non-fat milk. 
 - ☑ Serve other calcium rich foods each day.
- ☑ Provide a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each day. 
 - ☑ Include fruits and vegetables at every meal and for snacks.
 - ☑ Eat blue, purple, green, white, yellow, orange and red colored fruits and vegetables.
- ☑ Avoid high sugar foods. 
 - ☑ Serve no more than 4-6 ounces of 100% juice each day.
 - ☑ Limit consumption of sugar, including soda pop, sports drinks, candy, sweetened cereals and baked products.
 - ☑ Avoid foods with sugar listed as one of the top three ingredients. 
- ☑ Ban the *Trans Fat*.
 - ☑ Select foods without trans fat listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
 - ☑ Avoid ordering fried food at restaurants.
 - ☑ Remember, foods marketed as trans fat free are not necessarily low in fat, sugar or healthy.
- ☑ Shop Smart. 
 - ☑ Make a menu for the week and a shopping list.
 - ☑ Clip out coupons for foods.
 - ☑ Compare unit prices.

For a parent activity, use the hand-out titled “How Much Sugar is in my Food and Drink?” found in the handout section of this manual. 

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Physical Activity at Home

Why Promote Physical Activity?

One of the primary reasons for promoting physical activity among young children is that regular physical activity, combined with a balanced diet, can help prevent overweight among kids. As discussed in Module 1 of this document, childhood overweight is on the rise in the United States. Module 1, gives background information on childhood overweight and modules 4 and 5 give information on eating healthy at home. The material in this module will focus on physical activity at home.



Physical Activity Recommendations

Health experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week to maintain good health. Moderate physical activities are those that get your heart beating fast. Things like walking, bike riding, or mowing the lawn are examples of moderate physical activity. However, if your child is overweight or at-risk for overweight, increasing physical activity alone may not produce significant weight loss. Increased activity along with improved nutrition over a period of months will be necessary for noticeable changes in body fat.



All children need both planned activity and free play. The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends that preschool children get at least one hour of structured AND one hour of unstructured physical activity each day.

In addition, children should not remain inactive for more than an hour at a time. The only time kids should be not moving for more than an hour straight is when they are sleeping!

What Counts as Physical Activity?

Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by muscles that burns energy. So...any kind of moving counts as physical activity! Physical activity doesn't just mean exercises like jogging or push ups.... in reality, many things that kids consider "having fun" such as swimming, playing tag, or riding a bike are physical activities.

Physical activity can be moderate or vigorous. As mentioned earlier, moderate intensity physical activities include Things like walking or bike riding. Vigorous physical activities are things that really make you sweat. Running, aerobics, or shoveling snow might fall into this category.



Structured activity is when you make a specific time to be active and plan certain kinds of things to do during that time. Teaching

children how to move in all kinds of ways will help them enjoy physical activity. To make sure your kids are exposed to all kinds of movement you may want to plan specific physical activities to help them.

Young children should learn to jump, hop, skip, kick and throw. Take a little bit of time each day to help your kids learn and practice these activities. Make it fun by playing games that include these movements.



Unstructured Physical Activity

While structured physical activity is valuable, it is important for children to have time to play. Free play helps develop a child's imagination, creativity, body awareness and sense of space and dimension. Children learn about the world by moving around in it and exploring its wonder! Find a safe place near your home where your child can play with friends or siblings. If the weather is bad, provide soft objects like balls and bean bags for your child to play with indoors.

Examples of unstructured physical activity include a game of tag, climbing in a tree fort, pushing a friend on the swing, playing hide-and-go-seek, bike riding through the neighborhood or kicking a soccer ball around the yard.

Activate Your Family

The trick to increasing physical activity is to find things to do that are fun...when kids (and parents for that matter) are having fun, they forget about how hard they are working – because it isn't work, it's play!



Kids naturally love to move. As a parent you know how hard it is to get them to sit still! Use this love of movement to their advantage by encouraging your children to play.

Everyone needs physical activity to be healthy. When families are active together everyone benefits! Kids get to burn off their excess energy and parents enjoy the many health benefits of physical activity. As a parent, you are the role-model for your children...if they see you participate in regular physical activities they will be more likely to participate on their own as they get older. Plus, the extra time spent as a family unit helps build relationships and strong family bonds as well as pass down cultural values.



Try to be active as a family each day. Walk the dog together after dinner or go on a family bike ride to a local park or gym instead of watching T.V. You could assign each family member one night per week to be the "Coach of the Day" whose job is to organize or invent a game that evening!

Also, look for ways to incorporate movement into family events. Celebrate birthdays at the swimming pool or bowling alley. Schedule group games like volleyball, badminton, or touch football for summer family get-togethers. Try sledding, broom ball, or hockey during the winter.

Some of the best family physical activities are right outside your front door! Make use of Alaska's wonderful outdoor opportunities by doing active things like hiking, berry picking, or beach combing.

Get Outside

We all know that Alaskan winters can be very cold, but don't let that stop your activity fun! Kids love to be outside when there is snow on the ground and often don't even notice the chill in the air. As long as kids are dressed properly, provide and encourage cold weather activity.

Use snowy winter days to do physical activities like sledding, skiing, skating and snowman building. All of these activities are fun energy burners....kids will be doing healthy physical activity without even knowing it!

Indoor Fun

When the weather is just too cold or wet and you are forced indoors, find creative ways to keep kids moving. One way to do that is to adapt typical outdoor sports so they can be played indoors. For instance, you could play a game of "Socker" using a rolled-up sock as a ball and living room walls as goals!

Other fun indoor activities include having a treasure hunt, obstacle course, sit-up/push-up contests, arm wrestling contests, or pretend "ice skating" with sock feet on a linoleum floor. Another fun idea is to play music and create a new dance!

Children love animals! Here is an activity that will use your child's love of animals to learn new forms of movement. Simply collect pictures of different animals out of magazines or newspapers, paste the pictures on pieces of cardboard, then have your child imitate the movements of the animals.

If you don't have enough space at home for indoor games, consider using community physical activity facilities. Swimming pools and bowling alleys are great places to be active that often aren't too expensive. Schools often host "Open Gym" night and some schools have covered play areas you may be able to use. In addition, you may be able to walk the hallways of your local high school after school hours. Or, if there is a mall or large store in your town you could go there to walk and window shop.



Keep Kids Moving

Remember – children should not be inactive for more than an hour at a time unless they are sleeping.¹ On a typical week day sleep, school, playing and eating will occupy most of a child's day. However, there will be times during the week and especially on weekends when kids don't have much to do.

To reduce the amount of time your child spends inactive during free time, plan ahead and have several activities available for them to choose from. Playing outdoors, helping with household chores, reading and doing indoor games or crafts are all better options than just sitting around.

Weekends are when kids have the most free time and may tend to be inactive. To help kids get moving on the weekend days, plan a family hike or bike ride, or let them play outside both before and after lunch. Let kids brainstorm activity ideas during the week and make a written schedule for the weekend to post on the refrigerator.



Active Alternatives to Screen-time

Many studies have been done to identify the connection between television watching and childhood overweight. Research shows that as TV time increases, so do rates of overweight in teenagers. It's not clear whether this effect is due to TV taking the place of physical activity, or teens eating more while watching TV, or both.²



In Alaska, nearly 30% of high school students watch more than 3 hours of television on an average school day! Just imagine how many more hours are spent watching T.V. on weekends – not to mention video games and computers.³



Preschool children may have already developed a habit of watching television and playing video games. In our country the average child spends nearly 5 hours each day watching T.V. or playing video/computer games.⁴ The Association of American Pediatrics recommends that kids accumulate 2 hours or less each day of screen time.⁵

Try and curb these habits by setting limits on time spent in front of a screen. One way to monitor time spent watching television is to avoid putting a T.V. in a child's bedroom. Research shows that preschool children with a television in their bedroom watch an additional 4.8 hours of TV or videos every week and are more likely to be overweight than children without a bedroom T.V.⁶ Having young children watch T.V. in the living room allows you to monitor content as well as time spent watching television.

Believe it or not, it is possible to be active and get good activity ideas from watching television! When you and your child do watch T.V., consider watching a sporting event or outdoor recreation show and then go outside and try the activity.



Also, use those annoying commercial breaks to get your own quick workout...try having a family push-up or sit-up contest!

In addition, there are several programs targeted at children that include promotion of healthy behaviors. Sesame Street has regular lessons on healthy eating and Oscar the Grouch even sings the “Worm Workout Song” and encourages everyone watching to bend, twist and crawl along.

There are always times during the day when parents need time to get work done without the “help” of children. Identify these times during your day and plan fun activities that utilize a child’s imagination instead of relying on television or video games to distract them.

The time before the evening meal is usually one of those times. This is the perfect time for kids to play outside or have “clean up time” inside. If weather is bad or children are too young to play outside unsupervised, this can be “play time” when kids can color, play with blocks or Legos, or play board games.

If none of these is appealing to your child, have them join you in the kitchen and “cook” their own meal by combining ingredients you have set out for them in small containers. Or, have kids make their own pizza on a prepackaged crust with simple ingredients like cheese and pepperoni. When kids help in the kitchen they learn food preparation skills, become acquainted with new foods (which may increase the odds of actually trying them) and are decreasing time spent inactive.



Just Move!

As a parent remember that it is very important for kids to move as much as possible. Because children have a natural love of moving, your only job is to make sure that they stay safe and have fun doing it! Make sure that your children have time to play freely each day, but plan time in your schedule for structured activity as well.

Looking for places to be active in Alaska is as easy as looking out your window. Take advantage of local trails, beaches and mountains to keep your family active and healthy. When the weather is so bad that it’s not safe to be outdoors, think about using community facilities or just be creative in your own home. Either way, try to give your children positive experiences with physical activity so that they will continue to be active and enjoy a long, healthy life.



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