Nemours | Health & Prevention Services

Best Practices for Healthy Eating:

A Guide To Help Children Grow Up Healthy

Prepared in Collaboration with Delaware's Child and Adult Care Food Program

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This guide was created using recommendations from the following sources:

- The National Alliance on Nutrition and Activity Model Local School Wellness Policies (2006)
- Institute of Medicine *School Food Recommendations* (2007)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines (2007)
- American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations for Milk, Juice, and Breastfeeding.

For more detailed references, contact information, or to learn about our Campaign to Make Delaware's Kids the Healthiest in the Nation, please visit **www.growuphealthy.org**.

Version 2

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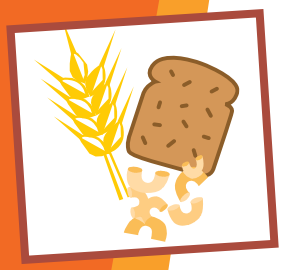
Healthy Habits Start Early!



Together with Delaware's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS) is providing this best practice nutrition guide to help young children in our state develop healthy eating habits early in life.

In Delaware, approximately 37% of our children are overweight or obese and are at high risk for developing serious health problems such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes. NHPS is joining with Delaware's CACFP to develop programs that translate current research into best practices for our children.

Children who are given healthy food options during early childhood are more likely to continue healthy eating habits when they are older. You and your program play an important part in introducing your children to healthy food, by both providing nutritious food and teaching children how to make healthy food choices. By sharing information with families, you can work with them as partners to support healthy children.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information on how to help the children in your care grow up healthy. In this guide you will find:

- Healthy food guidelines for beverages, fruits and vegetables, milk, meats and meat alternates, and grains and breads.
- Portion sizes that are based on the CACFP reimbursable meal guidelines.
- Rationale for the recommendations.
- Sample policies that you can use in your program and with families to support your work.

Hungry or Full?

Most infants and young toddlers can figure out when they are full and stop eating if permitted. It's amazing to watch young children over the course of the week; they eat as much as they need to grow! However, as the toddler becomes a preschooler, we place more food on the plate and he can lose that sense of when to stop, and continues eating even when he is not as hungry.

You can help children eat just the right amount by following these easy strategies:

For infants

- Look for hunger cues. Infants have different ways of showing they are hungry but common hunger cues include rooting or trying to put a fist in their mouth.
- When the infant cries, look to see what else could be bothering her before immediately feeding. An infant who cries may not be hungry. A need for sleep, affection or a diaper change may also be the cause.
- When the infant becomes distracted, and sucking stops or becomes less frequent, then take the bottle out and see if he still roots for it. The infant could just be using the bottle as a pacifier after he has fulfilled his hunger needs.
- Look for milk running out of the infant's mouth. An infant may let the bottle stay in her mouth even after she is full.
- It is not necessary to finish off a bottle, container of food or food on the plate. Even when there is an ounce left, if an infant is full, let him stop eating. If you are worried about wasting breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula, give smaller amounts and add more if the infant is still hungry.

For toddlers and older children

- Little tummies need small portions. Just like adults, when there is a large amount of food on the plate, children will eat it. Therefore, start small and ask them if they are hungry before serving or allowing second servings. This will also reduce food waste and save money!
- Serve family style — children will learn to put the right amount on their plates from the start.
- Create a positive eating environment by listening when a child says she is full. Discourage the "clean your plate" habit. A toddler may not say she is full, but she may start playing, become distracted, shake her head "no," close her mouth and refuse to finish the food on her plate.
- Sit with the children and let them see you eat when you are hungry and stop eating when you are full, even if there is food on your plate. Explain what you are doing.
- Complaints of being hungry, especially when a child has just eaten, may be due to other triggers such as boredom, TV advertising or seeing another person eating.

Create a positive eating environment by listening when a child says he is full...

What about those “picky eaters”?

It is natural for children to be cautious with new foods. We know that for young children, it can take 10 to 15 times of actually putting the food in their mouths before they will come to like it. We also know that some children are especially cautious about trying new foods, while others use food as a way to be in control.

Use these strategies to create a positive environment and minimize the struggles for trying new foods.

For infants

- Don’t be discouraged by a frown. Infants naturally prefer salty and sweet tastes, so for some fruits and vegetables, it may take 10 to 15 tries for a child to accept the new food. Don’t give up.
- When offering a new food, serve the infant a food they are familiar with and like. You could try alternating bites between the new food and the familiar food.

For toddlers and older children

- Create a routine that everyone should try and taste new foods offered at your center. It’s the rule at your table. However, do not force them to finish more than they want.
- Put a very small portion on the plate to try (like two peas). Young children may be concerned that they won’t like the new food, so help them by putting a small amount on their plates—it looks less overwhelming.
- Always offer healthy foods or create a policy that requires parents to provide healthy foods in lunches and snacks—especially ensuring that parents provide plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind. Especially avoid forcing a child to finish the “healthy foods” to get to their dessert or sweets—this can make the healthy food seem like punishment and force the child to eat when they are full.
- Offer desserts rarely so children do not expect them at every meal. When children come to expect dessert, they may not eat the healthier foods or they may see desserts as a reward for eating healthy food. By not having dessert as a regular option, you minimize this struggle.

- When introducing a new food, make it a game or lesson. Again, it can take up to 10 to 15 tries for a child to accept a new food. Try offering the new food outside the meal time. You can make it a classroom lesson and then have children who are interested in trying the new food take a taste and share their perceptions. This creates a desirability to try the new food.

Special note on breastfeeding and introducing solids

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive consumption of breast milk for at least the first four to six months of life. This is followed by the gradual introduction of solid foods beginning at age 4 to 6 months. Breastfeeding should still continue until 12 months of age or longer.

As a childcare provider, you can support breastfeeding by developing policies and practices to provide breast milk exclusively.

Children under 4 to 6 months of age should be drinking breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula exclusively.

Introducing solids beginning at four to six months of age

Signs that the infant may be developmentally ready for solids will most likely appear between 4 and 6 months of age:

- absence of tongue thrust reflex
- good neck and head control
- increased demand for breastfeeding that continues for a few days

When solid foods are introduced, the AAP recommends that single-ingredient foods be given one at a time.

Wait seven days between offering new foods, so that it will be easier to identify the food if the infant experiences an adverse reaction (allergy or intolerance).

As new solid foods are being introduced, it is best to consult with the child's parents (or legal guardian) and/or pediatrician.

Beverage Guidelines: Birth up to 12 months

To prevent tooth decay and overfeeding don't let infants sleep with a bottle or prop the bottle while feeding.

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth up to 4 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	• Other foods at this age
4 up to 8 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	• Food or drink other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula in a bottle unless medically necessary • Cow's milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent beverages like soy or rice milk • 100% fruit and vegetable juices (with no added sweeteners) until 12 months of age • Soft drinks • Sports/energy drinks • Sugary beverages including fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners, sweetened iced teas, punch, etc. • Artificially sweetened beverages including diet soft drinks, teas, lemonade, etc. • Caffeinated beverages
8 up to 12 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula • Water with no added sweeteners	

Rationale

Why is juice not recommended for infants until 12 months of age or older?

- We recommend whole fruits and vegetables, rather than juice, for infants during the first year of life because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.

Why should no food or drink other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula be served in the bottle?

- Food added to a bottle does not help infants sleep through the night.
- This practice deprives infants of the opportunity to learn to regulate their food intake.
- Bottle promotes tooth decay.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are high in calories and low in key nutrients.
- Breast milk or iron-fortified formula and water are the only beverages recommended for children during their first 12 months to meet their nutrient needs.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with:
  - Overweight or obesity
  - Calcium deficiency because sugary beverages displace milk
  - Tooth decay

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues. Signs of hunger in infants may be: sucking noises or sucking on fist or fingers, fussiness, or crying.

Signs of fullness may be: sealing the lips together, decreasing the amount of sucking, spitting out or refusing the nipple, pushing or turning away from the breast or bottle.

Age	Item	Meals	Snacks
Birth up to 4 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	4-6 oz.	
4 up to 8 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	Approximately 4-8 oz.	4-6 oz.
	• Water with no added sweeteners	Small amount can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula. Water can be used for practicing cup use.	
8 up to 12 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	Approximately 6-8 oz.	2-4 oz.
	• Water with no added sweeteners	Small amount can be given after breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula	

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Breastfeeding is encouraged and supported for infants of breastfeeding mothers. If a mother wishes to breast feed exclusively, the program will make every effort to provide breast milk to the child and supplement only when breast milk is gone.
- To support children's healthy eating habits, hunger and fullness cues will be observed and supported.
- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, this program will not serve any food or drink other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula in a bottle unless medically necessary.
- We at (*name of the program*) are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of the staff as positive role models for the children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, the staff will not drink soda and sugary beverages in front of the children in their care.
- We at (*name of the program*) are committed to children's nutrition and recognize the importance of adults as positive role models on children's behavior. Therefore, during functions or meetings at the center, we will only permit water, milk, or 100% fruit juice to be served.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We serve healthy meals and snacks in our program and our staff model healthy eating behaviors throughout the day. We ask for your support by not packing any food or drink other than breast milk and/or formula in a bottle unless medically necessary.

Fruit and Vegetable Guidelines: Birth up to 12 months

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth up to 4 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	• Other foods at this age
4 up to 8 months	• A variety of different fruits and or vegetables may be offered. All fruits and vegetables should be mashed, strained, or pureed to prevent choking. • Fruits and vegetables should be served plain, without added fat, honey, sugar, or salt at this age. • Some examples include: o Commercially prepared baby fruits o Commercially prepared baby vegetables o Fresh or frozen fruits o Fresh or frozen vegetables o Canned fruits (in their natural juices or water) o Canned vegetables with no added sodium	• Added fat, honey, sugar, or salt to fruits and vegetables • 100% fruit and vegetable juices until 12 months of age • Fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners • Food or drink other than breast milk and/or formula in a bottle unless medically necessary • Pre-mixed commercially prepared fruits with more than one food item • Pre-mixed commercially prepared vegetables with more than one food item • Fried vegetables and fried fruits • The following fruits and vegetables are a choking hazard to children under 12 months: o Dried fruit and vegetables o Raw vegetables o Cooked or raw whole corn kernels o Hard pieces of raw fruit such as apple, pear, or melon o Whole grapes, berries, cherries, melon balls, or cherry or grape tomatoes
8 up to 12 months	• A variety of different fruits and/or vegetables may be offered. • All fruits should be cooked if needed and/or cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking. • All vegetables should be cut into bite-size pieces and cooked to prevent choking. Corn, specifically, should be pureed and cooked before serving. • Fruits and vegetables should be served plain, with no added fat, honey, sugar or salt. • Some examples include: o Fresh or frozen fruits o Fresh or frozen vegetables o Canned fruits (in their natural juices or water) o Canned vegetables with no added sodium	

Rationale

Why are fruits and vegetables important?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They help children potentially develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Why no commercially prepared fruits and/or vegetables mixtures?

- Portions of the food components in the mixture are not specified.
- Mixture may contain a new food that the child has not tried and may cause an allergic reaction

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues.

Age	Item	Meals
4 up to 8 months	• Fruits and/or vegetables	0-3 Tbsp
8 up to 12 months	• Fruits and/or vegetables	1-4 Tbsp

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - o Gently encouraging children to try fruits and vegetables and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
  - o Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating fruits and vegetables in the presence of the children.
  - o Providing nutrition education.
- During celebrations and holiday parties, our program will offer fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - o For packed lunches, please include fruits and/or vegetables.
  - o For celebrations and holiday parties, please provide healthy foods (especially fruits and vegetables). An approved list of age-appropriate foods will be provided.

Meats and Meat Alternates Guidelines: Birth up to 12 months

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth up to 4 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	• Other foods at this age
4 up to 8 months	• Breast milk • Iron-fortified formula • Fruits • Vegetables • Iron-fortified cereal	• Other foods at this age
8 up to 12 months	• Protein sources such as lean meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), skinless poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes),nut butters, eggs, yogurt and cheeses are recommended. • Meat poultry and fish should have no more than 35% of calories from fat and no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). Nuts, nut butters and seeds are excluded from this fat restriction because the majority of their fat is unsaturated which promotes cardiovascular health. Eggs and dairy foods such as yogurt and cheese are good sources of protein that are highly digestible. • Foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend keeping trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible to reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease. • Try to limit sodium to 200 mg per serving. (See sample food label in Appendix). • Meats and meat alternatives should be soft, pureed, ground, mashed or finely chopped to prevent choking.	• Pre-fried baked foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks • Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon and sausage • Deep-fat fried foods • Nut and seeds because they are choking hazards for children this age • Pre-mixed commercially prepared meals • Fat, honey, sugar or salt added to meat and meat alternatives

Rationale

Why are meat and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, and eggs offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair and maintain body tissues.

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues.

Age	Item	Meals
8 up to 12 months	• Chicken, meat, egg, cooked beans or peas	1-4 Tbsp.
	• Cottage cheese or yogurt	1-4 oz.
	• Cheese	½ oz.- 2 oz.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

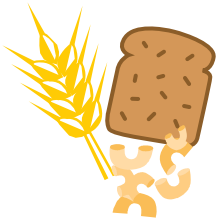
- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - o Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating only healthy foods in the presence of the children.
  - o Providing nutrition education.
- To support children's healthy eating habits, hunger, and fullness cues will be observed and supported.
- For meals brought from home, commercial pre-packaged lunches and/or baked pre-fried, or high fat meats such as chicken nuggets and hot dogs are not permitted.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - o For packed meals from home, please provide protein such as lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, cooked beans or peas, nut butters, eggs, yogurt or cheese. Pre-packaged lunches, and other baked pre-fried or high fat meats such as chicken nuggets and hot dogs are not permitted.

Grain and Bread Guidelines: Birth up to 12 months

Age	Recommended	Not Recommended
Birth up to 4 months	• Breast milk (preferred) • Iron-fortified infant formula	• Other foods at this age
4 up to 8 months	• Iron-fortified rice cereal for first introduction of cereal • Iron-fortified oat and barley infant cereal can be introduced after rice cereal	• Wheat cereal until babies are 8 months old • Commercially prepared cereal mixtures
8 up to 12 months	• Iron-fortified infant cereals • A food should have no more than 35% of its calories from total sugars. (See food label and examples). • All foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in appendix). • Commercially prepared, age appropriate, baked snacks are allowed for snack time only (such as teething biscuits). • For snacks, try to offer items that have no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving (cereals, crackers, baked goods, etc.). (See sample food label in appendix).	• Grains and cereals that have more than 6 grams of sugar per serving • Baked goods for breakfast (such as donuts, cinnamon buns) • Commercially prepared cereal mixtures • Baked snacks high in sugar and fat (such as cookies, granola bars, cupcakes)



Rationale

Why no commercially prepared cereal mixtures?

- Mixture may contain a new food that the child has not tried and may cause an allergic reaction.
- Portions of the food components in the mixture are not specified.

Portion Size

Watch for hunger and fullness cues.

Age	Item	Meals	Snacks
Birth up to 3 months	none		
4 up to 7 months	• Iron-fortified infant cereal	0-3 Tbsp.	
8 up to 12 months	• Iron-fortified infant cereal	2-4 Tbsp.	
	• Bread		½ slice
	• Crackers		2 crackers

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- High sugar or fat snack items will not be served to the children in our program.
- Celebrations include no more than one food that does not meet the adopted nutrition guidelines. A party list of foods meeting the guidelines will be provided to staff and families.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed meals, please provide grains, cereals, crackers and breads that meet the guidelines. High fat products (containing more than 35% of calories from fat) and high sugar products (containing more than 35% of calories from sugar) are not permitted. An approved list of age appropriate foods will be provided.

Beverage Guidelines: 1 up to 3 Years

Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, our program will encourage children over a year of age to exclusively use a cup instead of a bottle.

Recommended

- For children aged 12 to 23 months: whole milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk.
- For children aged 24+ months: 1% or fat-free milk or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk.
- Water with no added sweeteners.

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices (with no added sweeteners) to no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day.

Not Recommended

- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit based drinks with added sweeteners that contain less than 100% real fruit juice, sweetened iced teas, punch, etc.
- Artificially sweetened beverages including diet soft drinks, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Water	exempt from portion limit	
100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners	**¼ cup = 1 portion for children 12 to 24 months** no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day for children 2 to 3 years old	
Milk	**whole milk for children 12 to 24 months** **1% or fat-free for children 24+ months** ½ cup (4 oz.) during meals for children 1 to 3 years old	½ cup (4 oz.)

Rationale

Why whole milk for children younger than 2 years old?

- Whole milk provides some fats that are necessary for early growth and brain and spinal cord development.

Why 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- 1% and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Why limit juice?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting juice to 1 4-ounce serving a day in younger children.
- Excessive juice consumption may be linked to overweight or obesity.
- Excessive juice consumption is associated with tooth decay and diarrhea
- Whole fruits and vegetables are preferred to juice because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice

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Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are generally high in calories and low in nutrients.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with:
  - Overweight or obesity
  - Calcium deficiency because sugary beverages displace milk.
  - Tooth decay

Why no diet beverages or artificial sweeteners?

- Children have little tummies and while diet and artificially sweetened beverages have few calories, they may displace the intake of more nutritious drinks such as 1% or fat-free milk that children need in order to grow.

Why no other food or drink in the bottle?

- By age 1, all children should be drinking exclusively from a cup.
- Tooth decay is linked to using a bottle after 12 months of age.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of the staff as positive role models to the children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, the staff will not drink soda and sugary beverages in front of the children in their care.
- We at (*name of the program*) are committed to children's nutrition and we recognize the importance of adults as positive role models on children's behavior. Therefore, during any functions or meetings, we will only permit water, milk, or 100% juice to be served.
- We will only serve:
  - Whole milk for children younger than 2 years old
  - 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older
- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, our program will encourage children over a year of age to use a cup exclusively, instead of bottle.
- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, this program will not serve any food or drink, other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula, in a bottle unless medically necessary.
- Water will be clearly visible and available to the children at all times (indoors and outdoors).
- We will continue supporting families who are breastfeeding beyond 12 months.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We serve healthy meals and snacks in our program and our staff models healthy eating behaviors throughout the day. We ask for your support by:
  - Packing healthy lunches and snacks including only water, milk, or 100% juice (limit to ½ cup or 4 oz.). When packing milk please provide:
    - Whole milk for children younger than 2 years old
    - 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older
  - Bringing healthy foods for celebrations and holiday parties, including water, milk, or 100% juice. When packing milk please provide:
    - Whole milk for children younger than 2 years old
    - 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older

Fruit and Vegetable Guidelines: 1 up to 3 Years

Recommended

- A variety of different fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at every meal.
  - Fresh or frozen fruit (cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking)
  - Fresh or frozen vegetables (cut into bite-size pieces and cooked to prevent choking)
  - Canned fruits (in their natural juices or light syrup)
  - Canned vegetables with no or low sodium

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices (with no added sweeteners) to no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day.
- Added fat, sugar, or sodium to fruits and vegetables

Not Recommended

- Dried fruit and vegetables for children under 4 (choking hazard)
- Fruit-based drinks with added sugars
- Fried vegetables and fried fruits

Rationale

Why are fruits and vegetables important?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables daily. The current recommendation is at least 2 servings of fruits and 2 servings of vegetables per day.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases for children in this age group.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They help children potentially develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - Gently encouraging children to try fruits and vegetables, and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
  - Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating fruits and vegetables in the presence of the children.
  - Providing nutrition education.
- During celebrations and holiday parties, our program will offer fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed lunches, please include fruits and/or vegetables.
  - For celebrations and holiday parties, please provide healthy foods (especially fruits and vegetables). An approved list of age-appropriate foods will be provided.

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Fruits and vegetables (non-fried)	Exempt from portion-size upper limits: children may eat as many vegetables and fruits as they like. **At least ¼ cup of each fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at each meal and snack.**	
100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners	no more than ¼ cup (2 oz.) per day for children 12-24 months no more than ½ cup for children 2-3 years of age	

Milk Guidelines: 1 up to 3 Years

Age	Recommended
12 up to 24 months	• Whole milk and lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk.
24+ months	• 1% or fat-free or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk.

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Milk	½ cup (4oz.) **whole milk for children 12 to 24 months** **1% or fat-free for Children 24+ months**	

Rationale

Why milk?

- Low calcium intake is one of the more significant nutrient deficiencies identified in Healthy People 2010. Milk and milk products are high in nutritional value and provide calcium, protein, and vitamin D for bone growth and development.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the daily consumption of milk, cheese, yogurt, and other calcium-rich foods to help build strong bone mass in all growing children and adolescents.

Why serve whole milk for children younger than 2 years of age?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving whole milk to children under 2 years of age.
- Whole milk provides some fats that are necessary for early growth and brain and spinal cord development.

Why serve 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years old and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- 1% and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, this program will serve whole milk to all children under the age of 2.
- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, this program will serve 1% or fat-free milk to all children aged 2 and older.
- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, our program will encourage children over a year of age to exclusively use a cup instead of a bottle.
- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, this program will not serve any food or drink, other than breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula, in a bottle unless medically necessary.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support :
  - We encourage families to pack 1% or fat-free milk in your child's lunch for children aged 2 years and older.
  - Parents of children younger than 2 years old are asked to pack whole milk in their child's lunch.

Meats and Meat Alternates Guidelines: 1 up to 3 Years

Recommended

- Protein sources such as lean meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), skinless poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes), nut butters, eggs, fat-free or low-fat yogurt and cheeses are recommended.
- Meat, poultry and fish should have no more than 35% of calories from fat and no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). Nuts, nut butters and seeds are excluded from this fat restriction because the majority of their fat is unsaturated which promotes cardiovascular health. Eggs and dairy foods such as yogurt and cheese are good sources of protein that are highly digestible.
- Foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). The Dietary Guidelines for Americans advises keeping trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible to reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.
- Try to limit sodium to 200 mg per serving. (See sample food label in Appendix).
- Meat should be cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking

Not Recommended

- Baked pre-fried food items, such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks
- Deep-fat frying in food preparation
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, balogna, bacon and sausage
- Processed cheese food or product
- Nuts and seeds for children under 4 years old (choking hazard). If you do serve nuts and/or seeds to children under 4 years old, the USDA recommends they be served ground or finely chopped in a prepared food.
- Chicken or turkey with skin
- Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, albacore tuna (potential for high level of mercury)

Rationale

Why are meat and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, and eggs offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair, and maintain body tissues.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Our program is committed to children's nutrition; therefore, fried or baked pre-fried foods, such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks, or high fat items such as sausage, bacon, and bologna are offered no more than once per month.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed meals from home, please provide protein, such as lean meat skinless poultry, fish, cooked beans or peas, nut butters, eggs, yogurt or cheese. Pre-packaged lunches and other baked pre-fried or high fat items such as chicken nuggets and hot dogs are discouraged.

Portion Size

Item	Lunch	Snack
Meat, poultry, boneless fish, or alternate protein product	1/8 cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Cheese	1/8 cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Egg	½ egg	
Beans or peas	¼ cup (2 oz. or 4 Tbsp.)	1/8 cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)
Nut butters (peanut butter or soy)	1/8 cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Nuts and/or seed	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)	
Yogurt	½ oz cup (4 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)

* USDA literature uses the term "meat alternates"

Grains & Breads Guidelines: 1 up to 3 Years

Remember...

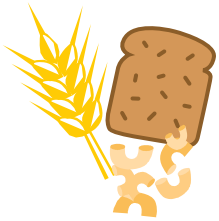
1 slice of bread equals 2 portions.

Recommended

- Whole grains are preferred for all grains, pastas, and breads. Look for whole grain to be listed as the first ingredient, or that the food contains the entire grain kernel. Examples include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice.
- Brown rice is preferred for all rice dishes when possible.
- A food should have no more than 35% of its calories from total sugars. Using this calculation is preferred. However, a simple alternative is to choose items that do not have sugars listed as the first, second, or third ingredients or have several listed. (See sample food label in appendix).
- A grain or bread should have no more than 35% of its calories from fat and no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat. (See sample food label in appendix).
- All foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in appendix).
- Choose foods that are highest in fiber (cereals, breads, pastas, etc.).
- Try to offer items that have no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving. (See sample food label in appendix).

Not Recommended

- Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
- Baked goods for breakfast that are high in sugar and fat such as cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, muffins, donuts.
- Baked snacks that are high in sugar and fat such as cookies, cakes, rice treats.



Rationale

Why serve whole grain?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half our grains whole grains and that all age levels consume 14 grams of fiber per 1000 calories. For children aged 12 to 36 months the recommended level of intake is 19 grams of fiber per day.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - Offering most breads, pastas, and grains made from whole grains.
  - Serving brown rice for all rice dishes when possible.
  - Serving whole grain cereals containing 6 grams of sugar or less.
  - Not serving high sugar or fat snack items.
- Celebrations will include no more than one food that does not meet the adopted nutrition guidelines. A list of party foods meeting the guidelines will be provided to staff and families.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed meals, please provide grains, cereals, crackers and breads that meet the guidelines. High fat products (containing more than 35% of calories from fat) and high sugar products (containing more than 35% of calories from sugar) are discouraged. An approved list of age appropriate foods will be provided.

Portion Size

Item	Lunch	Snack
Bakery items including, but not limited to bread, bagels, and other bakery items	½ slice	
Cereals, hot or cold	¼ cup (2 oz.)	
Pasta, noodles, or grains	¼ cup (2 oz.)	

Beverage Guidelines: 3 up to 6 Years

For 100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweetener, the recommended serving size is no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day.

Recommended

- 1% or fat-free or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice
- Water with no added sweeteners
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day.

Not Recommended

- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit based drinks with added sweeteners that contain less than 100% real fruit juice, sweetened iced teas, punch, etc.
- Artificially sweetened beverages including diet soft drinks, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Water	exempt from portion limit	
100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners	no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	
1% or fat-free milk	¾ cup (6 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)

Rationale

Why 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- 1% or fat-free milk contain as much calcium and vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calorioes and saturated fat.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are high in calories and low in nutrients.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with:
    - Overweight or obesity
    - Calcium deficiency because sugary beverages displace milk
    - Tooth decay

Why limit juice?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting juice to 1 4-ounce serving a day in younger children.
- Excessive juice consumption may be linked to overweight or obesity.
- Excessive juice consumption is associated with tooth decay and diarrhea
- Whole fruits and vegetables are preferred to juice because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.

Why no diet beverages or artificial sweeteners?

- Children have little tummies and while diet and artificially sweetened beverages have few calories, they may displace the intake of more nutritious drinks such as 1% or fat-free milk that children need in order to grow.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of the staff as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, the staff will not drink soda and sugary beverages in front of the children in their care.
- We at (*name of the program*) are committed to children's nutrition and we recognize the importance of adults as positive role models on children's behavior. Therefore, during any functions or meetings at the center we will permit only water, milk, or 100% juice to be served.
- We will only serve 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older.
- Water will be clearly visible and available to the children at all times (indoors and outdoors).

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We serve healthy meals and snacks in our program and our staff models healthy eating behaviors throughout the day. We ask for your support by:
- Packing healthy lunches and snacks including only water, milk, or 100% juice limited to ½ cup (4 oz.). When packing milk, please provide 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older.
- Bringing healthy foods for celebrations and holiday parties, including water, milk, or 100% juice. Please provide 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older.

1% and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and fat.

Fruit and Vegetable Guidelines: 3 up to 6 Years

Recommended

- A variety of different fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at every meal including:
  - Fresh or frozen fruits*
  - Fresh or frozen vegetables*
  - Canned fruits (in their natural juices or light syrup)
  - Canned vegetables with no or low sodium
  - Dried fruit and vegetables (choking hazard for children under 4 years old)

* Note: for children under age 4, cut into bite-size pieces and cook to prevent choking.

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day.
- Added fat, sugar, or sodium to fruits and vegetables

Not Recommended

- Fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners
- Fried vegetables and fried fruits

Rationale

Why are fruits and vegetables important?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They potentially help children develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - Gently encouraging children to try fruits and vegetables, and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
  - Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating fruits and vegetables in the presence of the children.
  - Providing nutrition education.
- During celebrations and holiday parties, our program will offer fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.

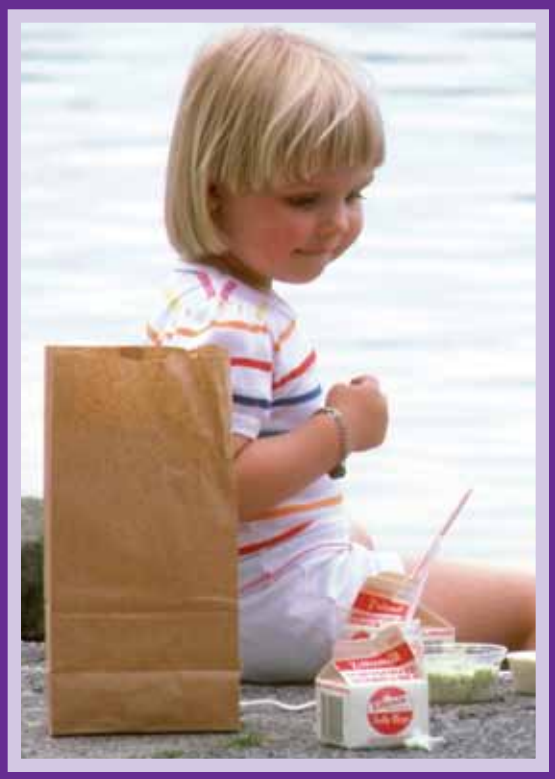
Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed lunches, please include fruits and/or vegetables.
  - For celebrations and holiday parties, please provide healthy foods (especially fruits and vegetables). An approved list of age-appropriate foods will be provided.

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Fruits and non-fried vegetables	Exempt from portion-size upper limits: children may eat as many vegetables and fruits as they like. **At least ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at each meal and snack.**	
100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners	no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	

Milk Guidelines: 3 up to 6 Years



Rationale

Why milk?

- Low calcium intake is one of the more significant nutrient deficiencies identified in Healthy People 2010. Milk and milk products are high in nutritional value and provide calcium, protein, and vitamin D for bone growth and development.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the daily consumption of milk, cheese, yogurt, and other calcium-rich foods to help build strong bones in all growing children and adolescents.

Why serve 1% or fat-free milk?

- The AAP recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- 1% and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, this program will serve 1% or fat-free milk to all children aged 2 years and older.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - We encourage families to pack 1% or fat-free milk in your child's lunch for children aged 2 years and older.

Recommended

- 1% or fat-free or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk.

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
1% or fat-free milk	¾ cup	½ cup

Meats and Meat Alternates Guidelines: 3 up to 6 Years

Recommended

- Protein sources such as lean meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), skinless poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes), nut butters, eggs, fat-free or low-fat yogurt and cheeses are recommended.
- Meat poultry and fish should have no more than 35% of calories from fat and no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). Nuts, nut butters and seeds are excluded from this fat restriction because the majority of their fat is unsaturated which promotes cardiovascular health. Eggs and dairy foods such as yogurt and cheese are good sources of protein that are highly digestible. Low-fat or fat-free yogurts and reduced-fat, low-fat or fat-free cheeses are preferred.
- Foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). The Dietary Guidelines for Americans advises keeping trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible to reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.
- Try to limit sodium to 200 mg per serving. (See sample food label in Appendix).
- Cheese should be fat-free, reduced-fat or part-skim.

Not Recommended

- Baked pre-fried food items, such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks
- Deep-fat frying in food preparation
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, balogna, bacon and sausage
- Processed cheese food or product
- Nuts and seeds for children under 4 years old (choking hazard). If served, the USDA recommends they be served ground or finely chopped in a prepared food.
- Chicken or turkey with skin
- Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, albacore tuna (potential for high mercury levels)

Rationale

Why are meat and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, eggs and nuts offer protein and other nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair, and maintain body tissues.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Our program is committed to children's nutrition; therefore, fried or baked pre-fried foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks, or high fat items such as sausage, bacon, and bologna are offered no more than once per month.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed meals from home, please provide protein, such as lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, cooked beans or peas, nut butters, eggs, or cheese. Pre-packaged lunches, and other baked pre-fried or high fat meats such as chicken nuggets and hot dogs are discouraged.

Portion Size

Item	Lunch	Snack
Meat, poultry, boneless fish, or alternate protein product	1 ½ oz. (3 Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Cheese	1 ½ oz. (3 Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Egg	¾ egg	½ egg
Beans or peas	3/8 cup (3 oz. or 6 Tbsp.)	1/8 cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)
Nut butters (peanut butter or soy)	1 ½ oz. (3 Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Nuts and/or seed	¾ oz. (1 ½ Tbsp.)	1/16 cup (½ oz. or 1 Tbsp.)
Yogurt	¾ cup (6 oz.)	¼ cup (2 oz.)

Grain and Bread Guidelines: 3 up to 6 Years

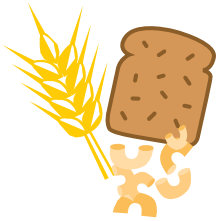
Baked snacks that are high in sugar and fat should be avoided or limited such as cookies, cakes, rice treats, etc.

Recommended

- Whole grains are preferred for all grains, pastas, and breads. Look for whole grain to be listed as the first ingredient, or that the food contains the entire grain kernel. Examples include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice.
- Brown rice is preferred for all rice dishes when possible.
- A food should have no more than 35% of its calories from total sugars. Using this calculation is preferred. However, a simple alternative is to choose items that do not have sugars listed as the first, second, or third ingredients or have several listed. (See sample food label in appendix).
- A grain or bread should have no more than 35% of its calories from fat and no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat. (See sample food label in appendix).
- All foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in appendix).
- Choose foods that are highest in fiber (cereals, breads, pastas, etc).
- Try to offer items that have no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving. (See sample food label in appendix).

Not Recommended

- Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving
- Baked goods for breakfast (such as cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, muffins, donuts) that are high in sugar and fat should be avoided or limited.
- Baked snacks (such as cookies, cakes, rice treats) that are high in sugar and fat should be avoided or limited.



Rationale

Why serve whole grain?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half our grains whole grains and that all age levels consume 14 grams of fiber per 1000 calories. For children aged 3 to 5 years old the recommended level of intake is 25 grams of fiber per day.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - Offering most breads, pastas, and grains made from whole grains.
  - Serving brown rice for all rice dishes when possible.
  - Serving whole grain cereals containing 6 grams of sugar or less.
  - Not serving high sugar or fat snack items.
- Celebrations will include no more than one food that does not meet the adopted nutrition guidelines. An approved list of age appropriate foods will be provided.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed meals, please provide grains, cereals, crackers and breads that meet the guidelines. High fat products (containing more than 35% of calories from fat) and high sugar products (containing more than 35% of calories from sugar) are discouraged. An approved list of age appropriate foods will be provided.

Portion Size

Item	Lunch	Snack
Bakery items including, but not limited to bread, bagels, and other bakery items	½ slice	
Cereals (cold)	⅓ cup (2.5 oz.)	
Cereal (hot)	¼ cup (2 oz.)	
Pasta, noodles, or grains	¼ cup (2 oz.)	

Beverage Guidelines: 6 Years and Older

Recommended

- 1% or fat-free or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners
- Water with no added sweeteners

Limit

- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day.

Not Recommended

- Soft drinks
- Sports/energy drinks
- Sugary beverages including fruit based drinks with added sweeteners that contain less than 100% real fruit juice, sweetened iced teas, punch, etc.
- Artificially sweetened beverages including diet soft drinks, teas, lemonade, etc.
- Caffeinated beverages

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Water	exempt from portion limit	
100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners	no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	
1% or fat-free milk	1 cup (8 oz.)	1 cup (8 oz.)

Rationale

Why 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- 1% and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Why are sugary beverages not recommended?

- Sports and soft drinks are high in calories and low in nutrients.
- Consumption of sugary beverages is associated with:
    - Overweight or obesity
    - Calcium deficiency because sugary beverages displace milk
    - Tooth decay

Why limit juice?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting juice to 1 4-ounce serving a day in younger children.
- Excessive juice consumption may be linked to overweight or obesity.
- Excessive juice consumption is associated with tooth decay and diarrhea in children.
- Whole fruits and vegetables are preferred to juice because they provide nutrients and fiber that may be lost in the processing of juice.

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Why no diet beverages or artificial sweeteners?

- While diet and artificially sweetened beverages have few calories, they may displace the intake of nutritious drinks such as 1% or fat-free milk that children need to support growth.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program)* are committed to our children's health. We recognize the importance of the staff as positive role models to the children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, the staff will not drink soda and sugary beverages in front of the children in their care.
- We at *(name of the program)* are committed to children's nutrition and we recognize the importance of adults as positive role models on children's behavior. Therefore, during any functions or meetings at the center, we only permit water, milk, or 100% juice to be served.
- We will serve only 1% or fat-free milk.
- Water will be clearly visible and available to the children at all times (indoors and outdoors).

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We serve healthy meals and snacks in our program and our staff models healthy eating behaviors throughout the day. We ask for your support by:
    - Packing healthy lunches and snacks including only water, milk, or 100% juice, limited to ½ cup (4 oz.). Please provide 1% or fat-free milk.
    - Bringing healthy foods for celebrations and holiday parties, including water, milk, or 100% juice. Please provide 1% or fat-free milk for children aged 2 years and older.

Fruit and Vegetable Guidelines: 6 Years and Older

Recommended

- A variety of different fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at every meal.
  - Fresh or frozen fruits
  - Fresh or frozen vegetables
  - Canned fruits (in their natural juices or light syrup)
  - Canned vegetables with no or low sodium
  - Dried fruit and vegetables

Limit

- Added fat, sugar, or sodium to fruits and vegetables
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices to no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day

Not Recommended

- Fruit-based drinks with added sweeteners that contain less than 100% real fruit juice
- Fried vegetables and fried fruits

Rationale

Why are fruits and vegetables important?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables daily. The current recommendation is at least 5 servings per day.
- Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals and other substances that may protect against many chronic diseases.
- They are high in fiber.
- They help children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- They potentially help children develop life-long healthy eating habits.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - Gently encouraging children to try fruits and vegetables, and giving positive reinforcement when they do.
  - Role-modeling positive behaviors by eating fruits and vegetables in the presence of the children.
  - Providing nutrition education.
- During celebrations and holiday parties, our program will offer fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed lunches, please include fruits and/or vegetables.
  - For celebrations and holiday parties, please provide healthy foods (especially fruits and vegetables). An approved list of age-appropriate foods will be provided.

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
Fruits and non-fried vegetables	Exempt from portion-size upper limits: children may eat as many vegetables and fruits as they like. **At least ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables should be offered at each meal and snack.**	
100% fruit and vegetable juices with no added sweeteners	no more than ½ cup (4 oz.) per day	

Milk Guidelines: 6 Years and Older

Recommended

- 1% or fat-free or lactose-free milk or nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages like soy or rice milk

Rationale

Why milk?

- Low calcium intake is one of the more significant nutrient deficiencies identified in Healthy People 2010. Milk and milk products are high in nutritional value and provide calcium, protein, and vitamin D for bone growth and development.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the daily consumption of milk, cheese, and yogurt and other calcium-rich foods for children to help build strong bones in all growing children and adolescents.

Why serve 1% or fat-free milk?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- 1% and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and Vitamin D as 2% and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Following the AAP recommendation, this program will serve 1% or fat-free milk.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - o We encourage families to pack 1% or fat-free milk in your child's lunch.

Portion Size

Item	Meal	Snack
1% or fat-free milk	1 cup (8 oz.)	

Meats and Meat Alternates Guidelines: 6 Years and Older

Recommended

- Protein sources such as lean meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), skinless poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes), nut butters, eggs, fat-free or low-fat yogurt and cheeses are recommended.
- Meat, poultry and fish should have no more than 35% of calories from fat and no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). Nuts, nut butters and seeds are excluded from this fat restriction because the majority of their fat is unsaturated which promotes cardiovascular health. Eggs and dairy foods such as yogurt and cheese are good sources of protein that are highly digestible. Low-fat or fat-free yogurts and reduced-fat, low-fat or fat-free cheeses are preferred.
- Foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in Appendix). The Dietary Guidelines for Americans advises keeping trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible to reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.
- Try to limit sodium to 200 mg per serving. (See sample food label in Appendix).
- Cheese should be fat-free, reduced-fat or part-skim.

Not Recommended

- Baked pre-fried food items, such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks
- Deep-fat frying in food preparation
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, balogna, bacon and sausage
- Processed cheese food or product
- Chicken or turkey with skin
- Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tile fish, albacore tuna (potential for high mercury levels)

Rationale

Why are meat and meat alternates important?

- Meats, beans, eggs and nuts offer protein and other valuable nutrients such as zinc, iron, and B vitamins.
- Protein supplies amino acids that build, repair, and maintain body tissues.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- Our program is committed to children's nutrition. Therefore, fried or baked pre-fried foods such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks, or high fat items such as sausage, bacon, and bologna are offered no more than once per month.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For meals brought from home, please provide protein, such as lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, cooked beans or peas, nut butters, eggs or cheese. Commercial pre-packed lunches and/or baked pre-fried or high fat items such as chicken nuggets and hot dogs are discouraged.

Portion Size

Item	Lunch	Snack
Meat, poultry, boneless fish, or alternate protein product	¼ cup (2 oz. or 4 Tbsp.)	⅛ cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)
Cheese	¼ cup (2 oz. or 4 Tbsp.)	⅛ cup (1oz. or 2 Tbsp.)
Egg	1 egg	½ egg
Beans or peas	¼ cup (2 oz. or 4 Tbsp.)	½ cup (4 oz. or 8 Tbsp.)
Nut butters (peanut butter or soy)	¼ cup (2 oz. or 4 Tbsp.)	⅛ cup (1oz. or 2 Tbsp.)
Nuts and/or seed	⅛ cup (1 oz. or 2 Tbsp.)	
Yogurt	1 cup (8 oz.)	½ cup (4 oz.)

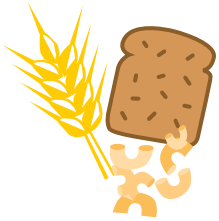
Grains & Breads Guidelines: 6 Years and Older

Recommended

- Whole grains are preferred for all grains, pastas, and breads. Look for whole grain to be listed as the first ingredient, or that the food contains the entire grain kernel. Examples include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice.
- Brown rice is preferred for all rice dishes when possible.
- A food should have no more than 35% of its calories from total sugars. Using this calculation is preferred. However, a simple alternative is to choose items that do not have sugars listed as the first, second, or third ingredients or have several listed. (See sample food label in appendix).
- A grain or bread should have no more than 35% of its calories from fat and no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat (See sample food label in appendix).
- All foods must have less than 0.5 grams of trans fat. (See sample food label in appendix).
- Choose foods that are higher in fiber (cereals, breads, pastas, etc).
- Try to offer items that have no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving. (See sample food label in appendix).

Not Recommended

- Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving
- Baked goods (such as cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, muffins, donuts) for breakfast that are high in sugar and fat should be avoided or limited.
- Baked snacks (such as cookies, cakes, rice treats) that are high in sugar and fat should be avoided or limited.



Rationale

Why whole grain?

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend making half our grains whole grains and that all age levels consume 14 grams of fiber per 1000 calories. For children aged 6 to 12 years old the recommended level of intake for girls is 25 to 26 grams per day and for boys is 25 to 31 grams of fiber per day.

Sample policy support for program, staff, and family handbooks

Program and Staff

- We at (*name of the program*) support your child's healthy food choices by:
  - Offering most breads, pastas, and grains made from whole grains.
  - Serving brown rice for all rice dishes when possible.
  - Serving whole grain cereals containing 6 grams of sugar or less.
  - Not serving high sugar or fat snack items.
- Celebrations will include no more than one food that does not meet the adopted nutrition guidelines. A list of party foods meeting the guidelines will be provided to staff and families.

Families

- Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at (*name of program*) ask for your support:
  - For packed meals, please provide grains, cereals, crackers and breads that meet the guidelines. High fat products (containing more than 35% of calories from fat) and high sugar products (containing more than 35% of calories from sugar) are discouraged. An approved list of age appropriate foods will be provided.

Portion Size

Item	Lunch	Snack
Bakery items including, but not limited to bread, bagels, and other bakery items	1 slice	
Cereals (cold)	¾ cup (6 oz.)	
Cereal (hot)	½ cup (4 oz.)	
Pasta, noodles, or grains	½ cup (4oz.)	

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 (1 cup, 30 grams)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 110	Calories from Fat 18	
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g		3%
Saturated Fat 0g		0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg		0%
Sodium 210mg		9%
Total Carbohydrate 22g		7%
Dietary Fiber 3g		12%
Sugars 1g		
Protein 3g		6%

Calcium

Iron

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 8 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Appendix

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Food Label Sample 45

Meal Size Photos

(on 10” dinner plate)

Meal size:

4 up to 8 months

Healthy Portion Serving Tips:

- Use the right portion for the right age.
- Make half the plate fruits and vegetables.

Meal size:

8 up to 12 months

Healthy Portion Serving Tips:

- STOP. Wait for your child to ask you for seconds rather than just serving more.
- Be a model—put the right amount on your plate and eat together.

Meal Size Photos

(on 10” dinner plate)

Meal size:

1 up to 3 years

Healthy Portion Serving Tips:

- It’s okay to leave food on the plate if your infant or child is full.
- For child size portions, use child size plates, glasses, and serving spoons.

Meal size:

3 up to 6 years

Healthy Portion Serving Tips:

- Limit 100% fruit juice servings to no more than ½ cup per day.

Meal Size Photos
(on 10” dinner plate)

Beverage Servings Photos
(in 10 ounce glass and in 16 ounce glass)

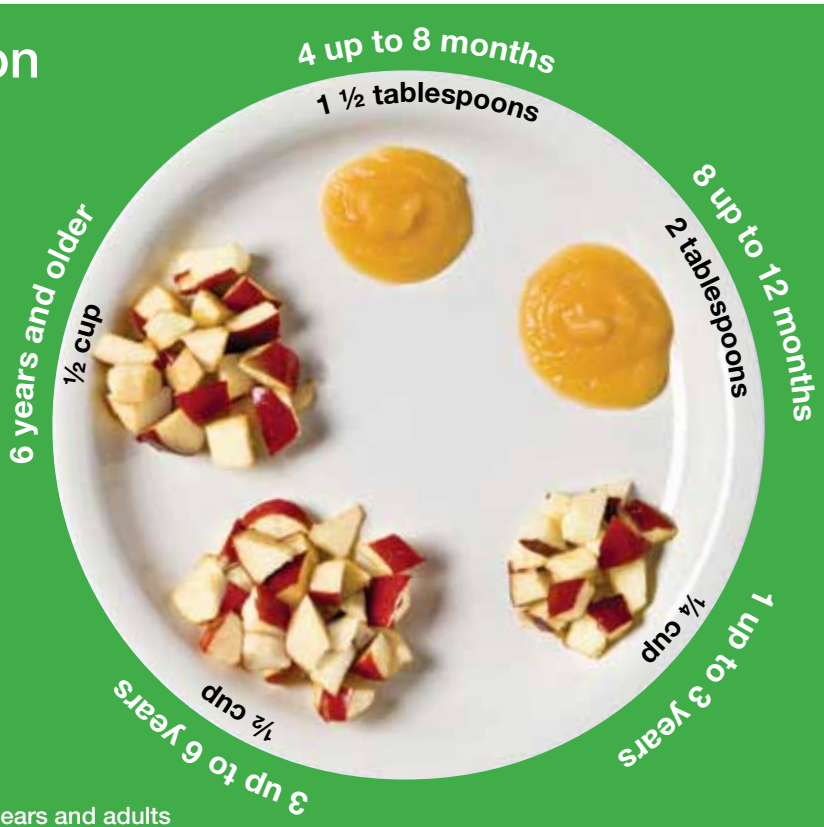
Milk portion (¾ cup) for 3-6 year olds

Fruit juice portion (½ cup) for children 3 years and older

Portion Size Photos

(on 10” dinner plate)

Fruit Portion Sizes



* Note: Children over 12 years and adults need at least ½ cup however 1 cup is preferred

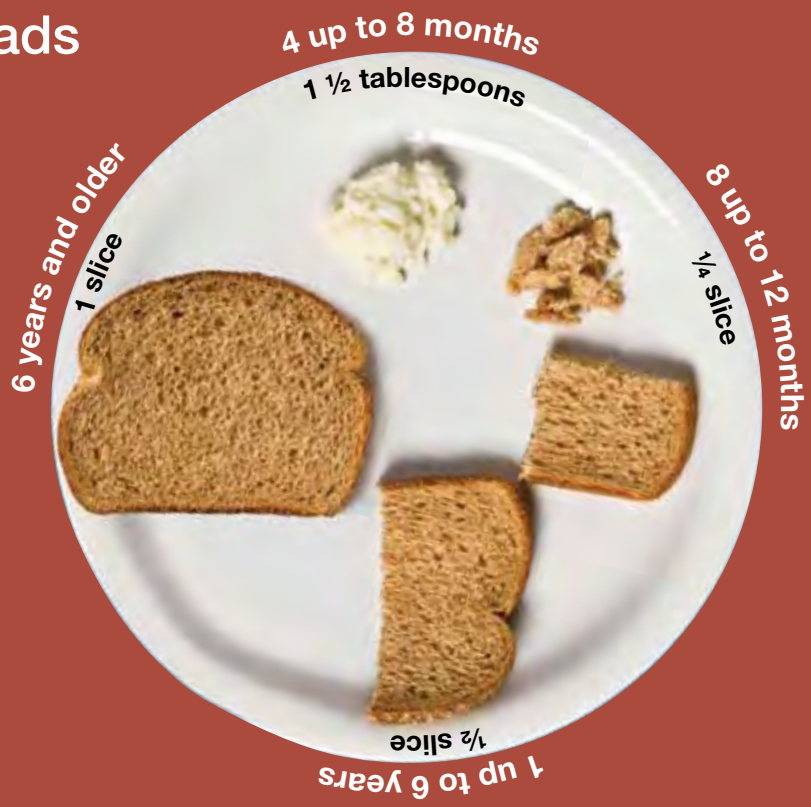
Vegetable Portion Sizes

* Note: Children over 12 years and adults need at least ½ cup however 1 cup is preferred

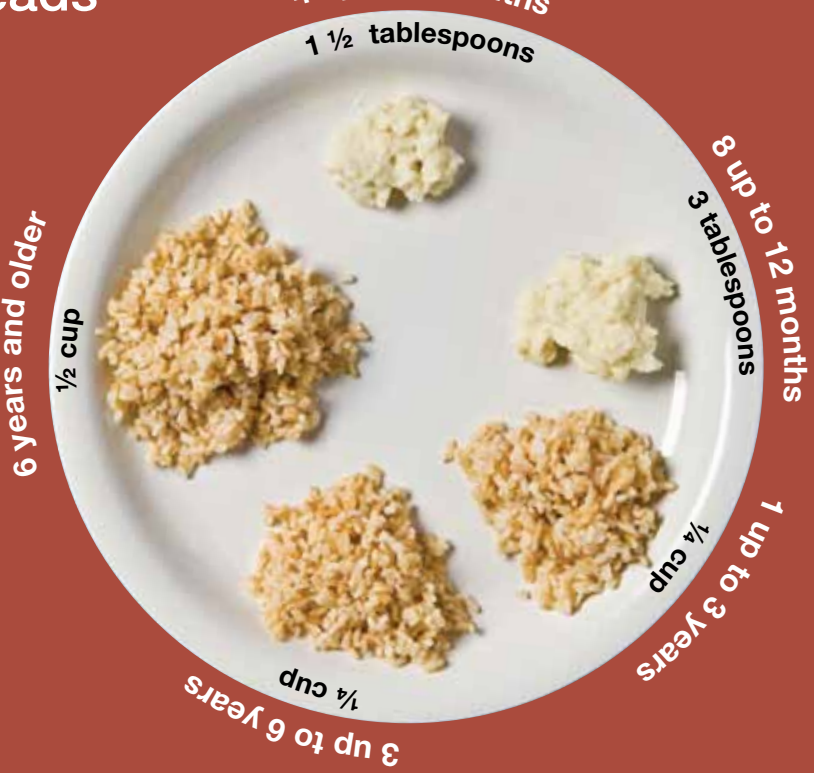
Portion Size Photos

(on 10” dinner plate)

Grains/Breads Portion Sizes



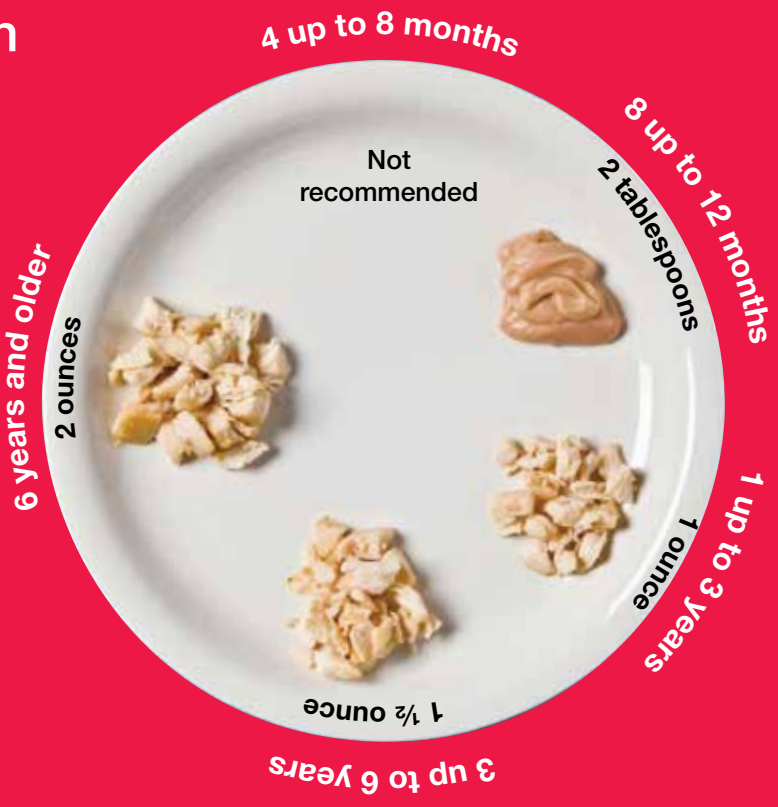
Grains/Breads Portion Sizes



Portion Size Photos

(on 10” dinner plate)

Meat Portion Sizes



Conversion charts for measures and weights

Liquid measures					
1 gal =	4 qt	8 pt	16 cups	128 fl oz	3.79L
½ gal =	2 qt	4 pt	8 cups	64 fl oz	1.89L
¼ gal =	1 qt	2 pt	4 cups	32 fl oz	.95L
	½ qt =	1 pt	2 cups	16 fl oz	.47L
	¼ qt =	½ pt	1 cup	8 fl oz	.24L

Dry measures				
1 cup =	8 fl oz	16 tbsp	48 tsp	237ml
¾ cup =	6 fl oz	12 tbsp	36 tsp	177ml
⅔ cup =	5 ⅓ fl oz	10 ⅔ tbsp	32 tsp	158ml
½ cup =	4 fl oz	8 tbsp	24 tsp	118ml
⅓ cup =	2 ⅔ oz	5 ⅓ tbsp	16 tsp	79ml
¼ cup =	2 fl oz	4 tbsp	12 tsp	59ml
⅛ cup =	1 fl oz	2 tbsp	6 tsp	30ml
		1 tbsp =	3 tsp	15ml

Food Recommendation Chart For Children 2 Years and Up

	Recommended	Limited	Not Recommended
Beverages	• Water • Fat-free and 1% milk	• 100% fruit juice (4 oz.)	• Whole milk • Regular or diet sodas • Sweetened iced teas, lemonade and fruit drinks with less than 100% fruit juice
Vegetables	• Almost all fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables without added fat (such as butter) or sauces	• All vegetables with added fat or salt	• Any vegetable fried in oil, such as french fries or hash browns
Fruits	• All fresh and frozen fruits and canned fruits packed in juice or water • Dried fruits (for children over 4)	• 100% fruit juice • Fruits canned in light syrup	• Fruits canned in heavy syrup
Milk	• Fat-free and 1% milk • Fat-free and low-fat yogurt and cottage cheese • Fat-free, part-skim, or reduced-fat cheese (including cream cheese)		• Whole milk • Full-fat cheese • Full-fat cream cheese • Yogurt made from whole milk • Processed cheese
Grains and Breads	• Whole-grain breads, pitas, and tortillas • Whole-grain pasta • Brown rice • Hot and cold unsweetened whole-grain breakfast cereals • Cereals and grains with less than 6 g. of sugar	• White bread and pasta unless it is whole grain • Taco shells • French toast, waffles, and pancakes • Biscuits • Granola	• Doughnuts, muffins, croissants, and sweet rolls • Sweetened breakfast cereals • Crackers made with hydrogenated oils (trans fats)
Meats and Meat Alternates	• Extra-lean ground beef • Chicken and turkey without skin • Tuna canned in water • Fish and shellfish that has been baked, broiled, steamed, or grilled • Beans, split peas, and lentils • Tofu • Nuts (for children over 4) • Egg whites and egg substitutes • Peanut-butter	• Lean ground beef, and turkey, and chicken with skin • Broiled hamburgers • Ham, Canadian bacon • Chicken and turkey with the skin • Tuna canned in oil • Whole eggs cooked without added fat	• Beef and pork that has not been trimmed of its fat • Ribs, bacon • Fried chicken, chicken nuggets • Hot dogs, bologna and other lunch meats, bacon, pepperoni, and sausage • Fried fish and shellfish • Whole eggs cooked with added fat
Sweets and Snacks	• Whole grain pretzels • Low-fat popcorn (for children over 4)	• Ice milk bars • Frozen fruit-juice bars • Low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream • Fig bars • Ginger snaps • Baked chips	• Cookies, cakes, and pies • Cheesecake, ice cream • Chocolate candy • Chips • Buttered popcorn
Butter, Ketchup, Dressings and other Toppings	• Ketchup • Mustard • Fat-free creamy salad dressing • Fat-free mayonnaise • Fat-free sour cream • Vegetable oil, Olive oil, • Oil-based salad dressing • Vinegar	• Low-fat creamy salad dressing • Low-fat mayonnaise • Low-fat sour cream	• Butter, lard, and margarine • Salt • Pork gravy • Regular creamy salad dressing • Mayonnaise, tartar sauce • Regular sour cream • Cheese or cream sauce, and dips

How to Read a Food Label

Serving Size and Servings Per Container

- Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually eating. If you are eating more than one serving, you need to multiply the calories by the number of servings.

Calories Per Serving

- Low - 40 calories or less per serving
- High - 400 or more calories per serving
- First check the calories and then check the nutrients to see what you will be getting from the foods you are eating.

Sodium

- Important to look for less sodium (<5% is low, and >20% is high) in order to reduce the risk of high blood pressure.
- Snack items should have no more than 200mg of sodium per serving.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 (1 cup, 30 grams)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 110 — Calories from Fat 18

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 210mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	6%

Calcium

Iron

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 8 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Fats

- Look for foods low in saturated and trans fat, and cholesterol. Most fats should be poly or monounsaturated.
- Food should have no more than 35% of its calories from fat and no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters.
- All foods should have less than 0.5g of trans fat.

Sugars

- Look for foods low in added sugars. Read the ingredient list and make sure that sugar is not one of the first three items on the list.
- Names for added sugars include: sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, molasses, and fructose.
- A food should have no more than 35% of its calories from total sugars.

Food Label Samples

Fats Label Calculations (http://www.coheso.com/nutridata)

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 (1 wiener, 45 grams)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 130	Calories from Fat 108	
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g		18%
Saturated Fat 4g		20%
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 35g		12%
Sodium 540g		23%
Total Carbohydrate 1g		0%
Dietary Fiber		
Sugars 1g		
Protein 5g		10%
Calcium		
Iron		

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 8 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Hot Dog

Calculating the percentage of calories from fat (requirement <35%)

Take the calories from fat and divide by calories

108/130 = 83%

Note: If calories from fat is not listed, you can determine the calories by multiplying the total fat by 9 (1 gram of fat = 9 calories).

Total fat = 12g x 9 calories per gram of fat = 108 calories from fat

This item would NOT qualify.

Calories from fat and divide by calories = % of calories from fat.

Deli Chicken Breast

Calculating the percentage of calories from fat (requirement <35%)

Take the calories from fat and divide by calories

9/50 = 18%

Note: If calories from fat is not listed, you can determine the calories by multiplying the total fat by 9 (1 gram of fat = 9 calories).

Total fat = 1g x 9 calories per gram of fat = 9 calories from fat

This item would qualify.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 (2 oz, 56 grams)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 50	Calories from Fat 9	
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 1g		2%
Saturated Fat 1g		3%
Trans Fat		
Cholesterol 25mg		8%
Sodium 470mg		20%
Total Carbohydrate 1g		0%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 0g		
Protein 9g		18%
Calcium		
Iron		

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 8 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Food Label Samples

Sugar Label Calculations

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 (1 bar, 44 grams)

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 160	Calories from Fat 27
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 1g	3%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol	
Sodium 115mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 32g	11%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 19g	
Protein 2g	4%
Calcium	
Iron	

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 8 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Cereal Bar

Amount of sugar
(requirement <35% of calories)

Take the sugars and multiply by 4, then divide by calories (1 gram = 4 calories)

(19g x 4)/160 = 47.5%

This item would NOT meet the sugar requirement.

This item would NOT qualify.

Whole Grain Cereal

Amount of sugar
(requirement <35% of calories)

Take the sugars and multiply by 4, then divide by calories (1 gram = 4 calories)

(4g x 4)/110 = 14.5%

This item would meet the sugar requirements.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 (1 cup, 30 grams)

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	Calories from Fat 18
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0g	0%
Sodium 210mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 3g	6%
Calcium	
Iron	

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 8 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Try this Simple Alternative:

Read the ingredient list and choose items that do not have sugars listed as the first three ingredients, or have several kinds of sugars listed.

How to identify sugars on the label:

- sugar
- sucrose
- glucose
- fructose
- high fructose corn syrup
- corn syrup
- maple syrup
- molasses

Did You Know

4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon

Notes:

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Version 2

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