



Feeding Guidelines: Ages 7-12

Children between the ages of 7 and 12 are growing quickly. Their appetites are increasing, and they are eating more. Some children may not like trying new and different foods and may become comfortable eating only a few different kinds of foods. Friends begin to affect what they choose to eat. Many children in this age group become involved in sports and other social activities. They may begin skipping meals – especially breakfast. (It is especially important that parents or other caregivers try to get children to eat a healthy meal before school.)

Puberty can begin at the upper end of this age group, and with it comes normal growth and weight gain. This is also a time when children tend to eat more snack foods and fast foods and do not get enough exercise. For these reasons, there is more of a possibility of children becoming overweight or even obese.

It is especially important for children in this age group to get well-balanced, nutritious meals and snacks to ensure good nutrition for growth and to help prevent excessive weight gain. Parents and caregivers also should encourage physical activity and limit television, computer and video game time. The Center of Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days if not all days of the week.

On the other end of the spectrum, children between the ages of 7 and 12 usually become much more aware of their bodies. Some children – especially girls – may begin dieting. Parents should be on the lookout for this and remember that dieting is not necessary and can lead to poor eating habits and even serious eating disorders.

The following is a sample menu for a day's worth of healthy meals and snacks for children between the ages of 7 and 12.

Breakfast

3/4 cup orange juice
3/4 cup corn flakes
1 banana
1 cup low-fat milk

Lunch

Ham sandwich with 2 ounces ham (2 slices)
whole-wheat bread, mayonnaise, lettuce and tomato
1 serving Goldfish snack crackers
1 apple
2 cookies
1 cup water or sugar-free beverage

Snack

2 cups popcorn
1 cup low-fat yogurt

Dinner

2-3 ounces roast beef
1/2 cup corn
1/2 cup green beans
1/2 cup rice
1 cup low-fat milk

Dessert

1/2 cup frozen yogurt



<p>Dairy products <i>Three to four servings per day</i> A good source of protein, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin D</p>	<p>Food samples and serving sizes: 1 cup milk (low-fat or skim is best) 1 cup low-fat yogurt 1 ounce cheese</p>
<p>Meat and other protein foods <i>Two servings per day</i> A good source of protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins</p>	<p>Food samples and serving sizes: 2-3 ounces fish, poultry, meat 1/2 cup beans 2 tablespoons peanut butter 1 egg</p>
<p>Breads, cereals and starches <i>Six to eight servings per day</i> A good source of complex carbohydrates, fiber, B vitamins and a variety of minerals</p>	<p>Food samples and serving sizes: 1 slice bread 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, pasta 3/4 cup dry cereal 4 crackers</p>
<p>Vegetables <i>Three to four servings per day</i> A good source of vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and fiber</p>	<p>Food samples and serving sizes: 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw vegetables Every other day, offer a dark green or yellow vegetable such as carrots, broccoli, greens or sweet potatoes</p>
<p>Fruits <i>Two to three servings per day</i> A good source of vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium and fiber</p>	<p>Food samples and serving sizes: 1 fresh fruit, 1/4 cup dried fruit 1/2 cup canned fruit 3/4 cup juice Every day, offer a good source of vitamin C such as an orange, grapefruit, strawberries, melon, kiwi or tomato</p>
<p>Fats, oils, etc. Vegetable oils and margarine are good sources of vitamin E</p>	<p>Food samples and serving sizes: 3-5 teaspoons daily added fat such as butter, margarine, oil Limit chips, candy, desserts, ice cream and sodas because these provide a very concentrated source of calories and little nutrient value <i>Limit foods in this group unless you need extra calories</i></p>

Developed by Food and Nutrition Services.



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