

Texas Children's Hospital

Caring for Your Child's Health

Healthy Eating Habits

Healthy eating habits can help your child maintain a healthy weight. It is important for children to eat balanced meals to ensure good nutrition and to prevent extra weight gain as they grow. Below are some suggestions to help you get started.

- **Eat a variety of foods**

Eat fruits, vegetables, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, lean meats, fish and chicken, bread, cereal, rice, pasta and corn tortillas. Eat only a small amount of fats like margarine, butter, oil, mayonnaise and salad dressing. Do not eat a lot of fried foods.

- **Eat proper portion sizes**

See the food guide pyramid on the back page for serving sizes. Avoid large portions of foods. Large portions are common when you eat out, so split meals or take half home.

- **Do not skip meals**

Try to eat at the same time every day. Regular meal and snack times will give you more control over what you eat. If you skip meals, you might over eat at the next meal.

- **Eat slowly**

Put your fork down between bites.

- **Drink plenty of water**

Drink about eight glasses of water a day. Regular sodas, fruit juice, fruit punches and sports drinks should be avoided or limited to one per day. Sugar-free drinks are okay in moderation.

- **Eat healthy snacks**

Regular snacking on chips, cookies, candy and ice cream can cause weight gain. See the snack list for ideas on healthier, lower calorie snacks.

- **Do not eat in front of the television**

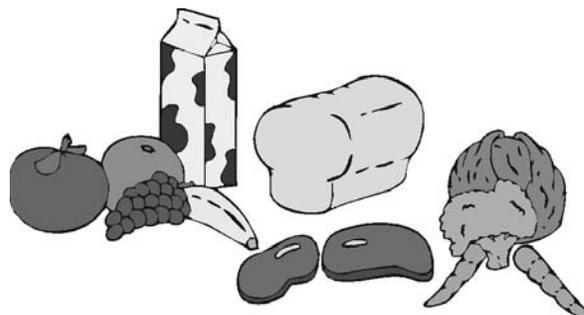
It is easy to overeat when you are paying attention to the television instead of your food.

- **Increase your activities**

Walk the dog, ride your bike, skate, play basketball, play sports at school or after school, swim or do any activity you enjoy. If you use a wheelchair, talk to your doctor about activities and exercises you can do.

Changing your habits is easier to do if the whole family is helping

Changing to a healthier diet and increasing exercise is good for every person in the family.



Healthy snacks for kids and grown-ups

Remember: plan your snack time and eat snacks in moderation.

- Fresh fruits, frozen grapes, fruit kabobs (cut up favorite fruits and let children put on wooden skewers – with adult supervision since the sticks are sharp)
- Bagels
- Hot or cold cereals with low-fat (1/2 percent or 1 percent) or skim milk. Choose low sugar cereal with 10 grams of sugar or less per serving
- Low-fat snack crackers, pretzels, baked chips, low-fat microwave popcorn
- Vanilla wafers, Teddy Grahams®, animal crackers, graham crackers (limit amount to a small serving)

- Flavored rice cakes
- Frozen fruit bars, sorbet, fat-free frozen yogurt or ice milk
- Pudding made with low-fat or skim milk (instant pudding is quick and less expensive than the ready-made pudding; put in individual cups for easy serving)
- Sugar-free gelatin made with fresh or canned unsweetened fruit
- Canned fruit packed in its own juice
- Fruit snacks or fruit roll ups
- Blanched (slightly cooked) plain fresh vegetables or with low-fat or fat-free salad dressing
- Low-fat cheese or turkey sticks
- Frozen banana sticks (Put a popsicle stick into half a banana, roll in yogurt and freeze on wax paper. When frozen, roll in more yogurt and then roll in graham cracker crumbs. Let thaw slightly before eating.)
- Frozen fruit juice popsicles (Partially freeze your favorite fruit juice in a paper cup, put a popsicle stick in it and then thoroughly freeze.)

Get up and get moving

Children who are physically active have more energy and can develop better strength, coordination, balance and flexibility than those who are not active. A physically active lifestyle helps prevent weight gain and obesity. Fitness encourages a feeling of self confidence and control that will help children be happy and healthy.

Physical activity: Any movement will do. A total of 60 minutes of active play and physical activity every day is recommended. This goal can be reached in a few minutes of time throughout the day.

- Walk to and from the bus stop
- Jump rope or play tag at recess
- Ride a bike after school
- Walk the dog
- Take stairs instead of the elevator
- Play frisbee or basketball after supper

- Mow the grass or rake leaves
- Play soccer in the yard with friends
- Help vacuum and sweep the house
- Limit television, video game and computer time to no more than an hour a day

Parents: Be a role model to your children by exercising regularly and remaining active

The better choice for healthy eating

Breakfast

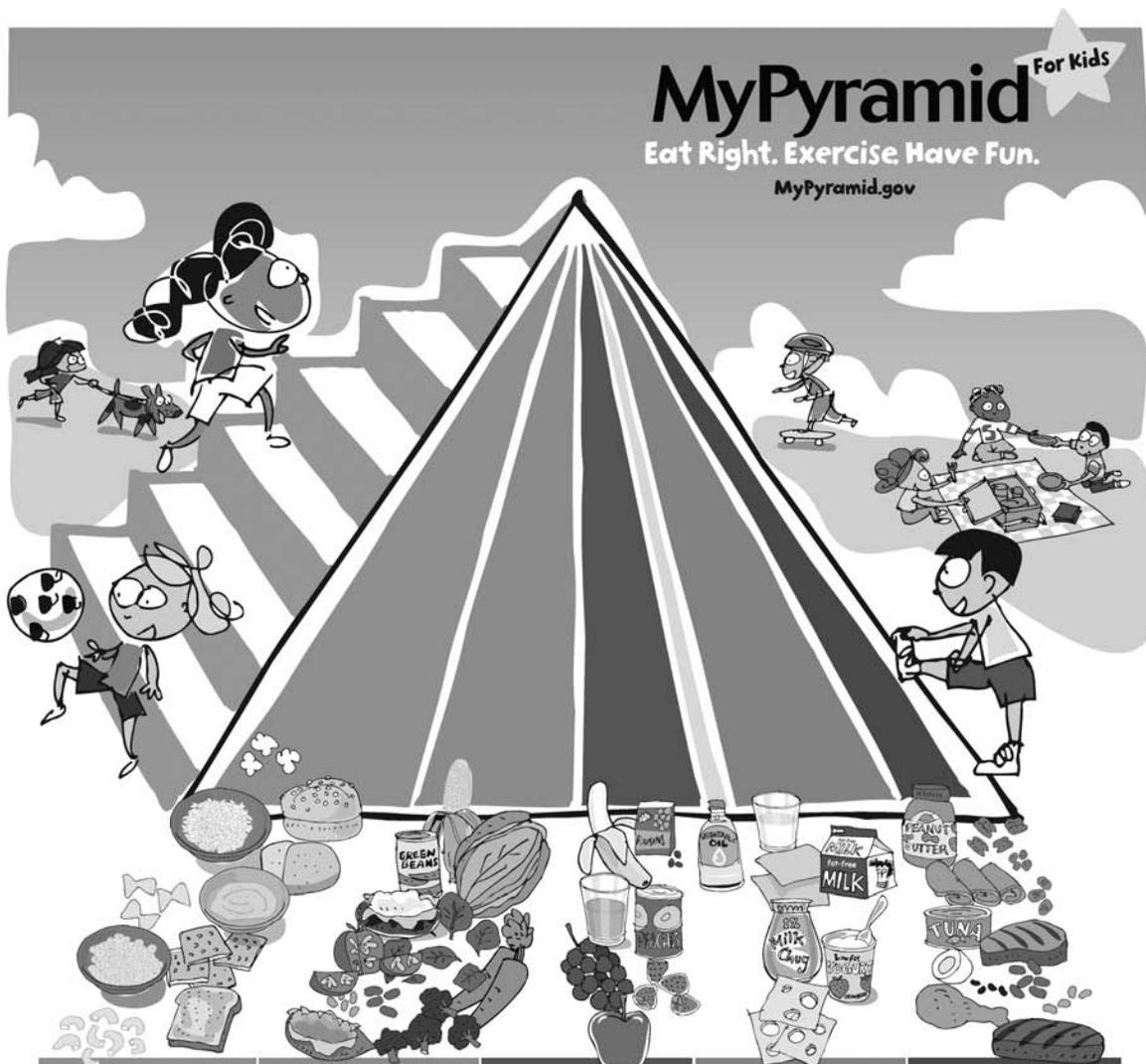
<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
Sausage biscuit	Waffle with fruit
Hash browns	Oatmeal or grits
Bacon and eggs	Raisin bran
Whole milk	Low-fat milk

Lunch

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
Cheeseburger	Small, lean burger
Peanut butter sandwich	Turkey sandwich
Pepperoni pizza	Cheese pizza
French fries	Carrot sticks
Potato chips	Pretzels
Soft drink	Water, skim milk or sugar-free drink

Dinner

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
Fried, breaded pork chops	Baked pork chops
Fried fish	Broiled fish
Fried chicken	Grilled chicken
Mashed potatoes with gravy	Baked potato with low-fat sour cream
Green beans with salt pork	Steamed green beans with a little margarine
White rice with gravy	Brown rice with a little margarine



MyPyramid ^{For Kids}

Eat Right. Exercise Have Fun.
MyPyramid.gov

Grains Make half your grains whole	Vegetables Vary your veggies	Fruits Focus on fruits	Milk Get your calcium-rich foods	Meat & Beans Go lean with protein
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<p>Start smart with breakfast. Look for whole-grain cereals.</p> <p>Just because bread is brown doesn't mean it's whole-grain. Search the ingredients list to make sure the first word is "whole" (like "whole wheat").</p>	<p>Color your plate with all kinds of great-tasting veggies.</p> <p>What's green and orange and tastes good? Veggies! Go dark green with broccoli and spinach, or try orange ones like carrots and sweet potatoes.</p>	<p>Fruits are nature's treats – sweet and delicious.</p> <p>Go easy on juice and make sure it's 100%.</p>	<p>Move to the milk group to get your calcium. Calcium builds strong bones.</p> <p>Look at the carton or container to make sure your milk, yogurt, or cheese is lowfat or fat-free.</p>	<p>Eat lean or lowfat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Ask for it baked, broiled, or grilled – not fried.</p> <p>It's nutty, but true. Nuts, seeds, peas, and beans are all great sources of protein, too.</p>
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For an 1,800-calorie diet, you need the amounts below from each food group. To find the amounts that are right for you, go to MyPyramid.gov.

Eat 6 oz. every day; at least half should be whole	Eat 2 1/2 cups every day	Eat 1 1/2 cups every day	Get 3 cups every day; for kids ages 2 to 8, it's 2 cups	Eat 5 oz. every day
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Oils Oils are not a food group, but you need some for good health. Get your oils from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, and canola oil.

<p>Find your balance between food and fun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move more. Aim for at least 60 minutes everyday, or most days. Walk, dance, bike, rollerblade – it all counts. How great is that! 	<p>Fats and sugars – know your limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get your fat facts and sugar smarts from the Nutrition Facts label. Limit solid fats as well as foods that contain them. Choose food and beverages low in added sugars and other caloric sweeteners.
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