

Growing Up Healthy

Fat, Cholesterol and More



Children and Heart Disease: A Generation at Risk

Many Americans consume too many calories and too much fat, especially saturated fat, and cholesterol. These eating patterns are one cause of America's high rates of obesity and heart disease. As a parent or caregiver, you can help your child develop eating and physical activity habits to stay healthy now — and throughout life.

What's a Parent to Do?

Food and physical activity habits begin at home. Although many things influence children, adults are still the most important role models for developing healthful eating and lifestyle habits.

The information in this brochure provides eating and physical activity guidelines for healthy children ages two years and over. For specific food and nutrition advice, talk to your child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian.

Fat in Food: How Much for Children?

If heart disease runs in your family, your child is at greater risk for heart disease in adulthood. To help protect your child from heart disease later in life, help him or her learn healthful eating and lifestyle habits during childhood.

Most nutrition experts agree that childhood is the best time to start cutting back on total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. But adult goals aren't meant for young children under the age of two years. Fat is an essential nutrient that supplies energy, or calories, they need for growth and active play.

Between the ages of two and five, as children eat with their family, encourage them to gradually choose foods with less fat and saturated fat. By age five, their overall food choices, like yours, should be low in fat.



You might wonder: how is saturated fat different from other fat? It's more solid at room temperature. Saturated fats come mostly from animal sources, such as butter, cheese, bacon and meat, as well as stick margarine.

Caution: A low-fat eating plan is not advised for children under two years of age because of special needs for rapid growth and development during these years.

Pyramid Way to Healthful Eating

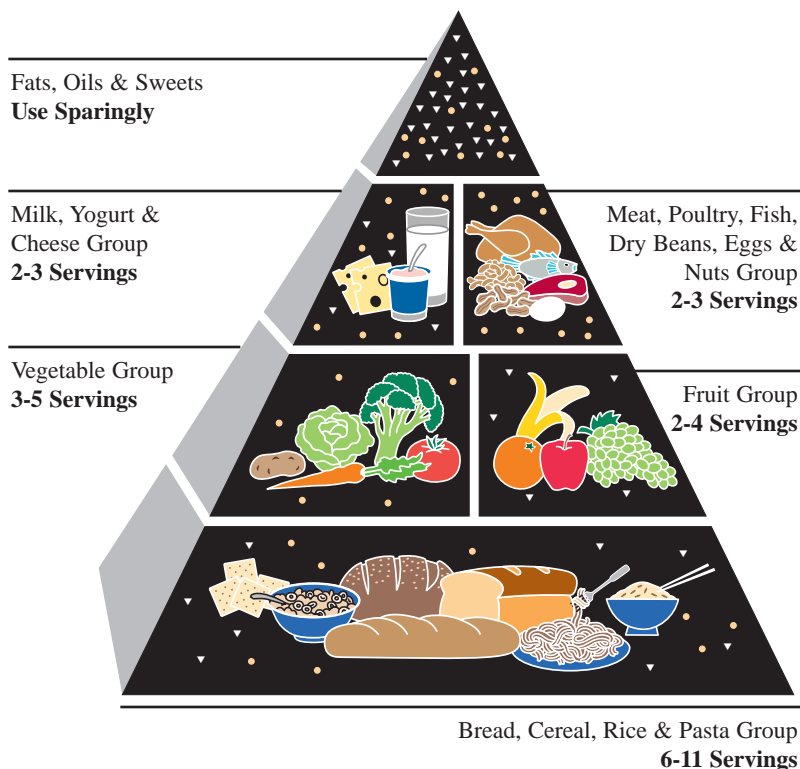
For healthful eating, offer foods from the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid. Encourage nutrient-rich foods with less fat: grain products; fruits; vegetables; low-fat dairy foods; and lean meats, poultry, fish, and cooked dry beans.

Most young children — age two and over — need the minimum number of servings from each food group. Although children will decide how much they can eat, a child-size serving is one-fourth to one-third the size of an adult portion. That's about one measuring tablespoon per year of the young child's age.

Good Nutrition: It's a Juggling Act

Chances are that some of your child's favorite foods are higher in fat and energy (or calories) compared to the amount of nutrients they provide. Any food that supplies energy and nutrients can fit into a nutritious eating plan for your child.

Follow this nutrition advice: Offer your child many different food-group foods. Be flexible; what children eat over several days, not one day or one meal, is what counts. Help your child eat sensibly. Here are ways to be sensible about fat, saturated fat and cholesterol in food choices:



Food Group...	Most Days...	Some Days...
Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta	bagel or English muffin Pretzels, baked chips graham crackers, crackers, fig bars, vanilla wafers	doughnut or danish regular corn chips chocolate chip cookies, cupcakes



Food Group...	Most Days...	Some Days...
Vegetable	baked potato raw vegetables	french fries creamy cole slaw
Fruit	fresh fruit and juice	—
Milk, Yogurt and Cheese	reduced-fat cheese low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream	cheese ice cream
Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts	baked and grilled chicken baked fish	fried chicken fried fish sticks

Smart Ideas for the Whole Family

Try these simple tips to limit extra fat, saturated fat and cholesterol:

- Have plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables available and ready to eat.
- Offer skim or 1% milk* and low-fat yogurt. Choose cheeses that are lower in fat.
- Include starchy foods, such as potatoes, rice, pasta, and whole-grain breads and cereals often.
- Choose lower fat or fat-free toppings like grated parmesan cheese, herbed cottage cheese and nonfat/low-fat gravy, sour cream, or yogurt.
- Select lean meats, such as skinless chicken and turkey, fish, lean beef cuts (round, loin, lean ground beef) and lean pork cuts (tenderloin, chops, ham). Trim off all visible fat, and remove skin from poultry before eating.
- Choose margarine and vegetable oils made from canola, corn, sunflower, soybean and olive oils. Choose tub and liquid margarine, rather than regular margarine in sticks, too.
- Try angel food cake, frozen fruit bars, and low-fat/fat-free frozen desserts such as fudge bars, yogurt or ice cream.
- Use nonstick vegetable sprays when cooking.
- Use fat-free cooking methods, such as baking, broiling, grilling, poaching or steaming, when preparing meat, poultry or fish.
- Serve vegetable- and broth-based soups. Or use skim or 1% milk* or evaporated skim milk when making cream soups.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label of food packages to find foods with less fat per serving. Be sure to check serving size as you make choices. Remember that the % Daily Values on food labels are based on calorie levels for adults.

*Children *under* two years old should only drink whole milk.

Parent Tip: Forget “Forbidden” Foods

Forcing children to eat food doesn’t work. Neither does forbidding foods. Foods that are “forbidden” just may become more desirable for children.



It's important for both children and adults to be sensible and enjoy all foods, but not to overdo on any one type of food. Sweets and higher-fat snack foods in appropriate portions are okay. Just make sure your child is offered wise food choices from all the food groups.

Caution:

- Restricting a child's eating pattern too much may harm growth and development, or encourage undesirable eating behaviors.
- Before making any drastic changes in a child's eating plan or physical activity habits, talk to your child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian.
- Don't restrict fat or calories for children under two years of age, except on the advice of your child's pediatrician.

Teach Good Habits by Example

Children learn more from ACTIONS than from WORDS. Practice what you preach. Your actions will make you healthier, too!

Get Up and Move... Turn Off That Tube!

Too much television usually results in not enough physical activity or creative play. Pediatricians recommend limiting TV time to no more than one or two hours each day.

Be active. Join your children in doing other activities. These activities will please almost any young child:

- Playing tag
- Throwing balls
- Pulling a wagon
- Digging in the sand
- Ice skating or sledding
- Playing on swings
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Jumping rope
- Riding a tricycle or bicycle
- Flying a kite
- Making a snowman
- Jumping in leaves
- "Driving" a toy truck
- Walking with the family
- Pushing a toy shopping cart



From your doctor

This brochure was developed as part of the **HEALTHY START...Food to Grow On** program, an information and education campaign that promotes healthful food choices and eating habits for healthy children ages two years and over. The **HEALTHY START** program was produced as a cooperative effort by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The American Dietetic Association (ADA), and the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

For a referral to a registered dietitian and food and nutrition information, call the ADA's National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics Consumer Nutrition Hot Line at (800) 360-1655. For answers to your food and nutrition questions from a registered dietitian, please dial (900) CALL-AN-RD or (900) 225-5267.

For additional copies of this brochure, contact:

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