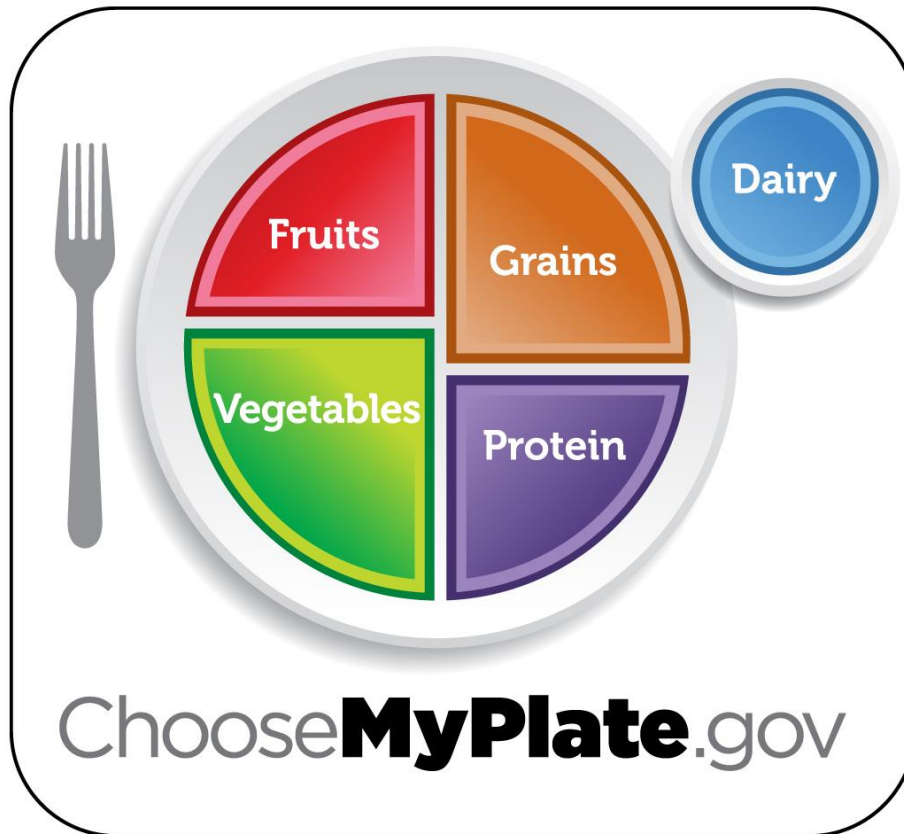


Keeping Your Preschooler **HEALTHY**



Offer a variety of healthy foods.

Choose foods from each MyPlate food group. Pay attention to dairy foods, whole grains, and vegetables to build healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Be mindful of sweet drinks and other foods.

Offer water instead of sugary drinks like regular soda and fruit drinks. Other foods like hot dogs, burgers, pizza, cookies, cakes, and candy are only occasional treats.

Focus on the meal and each other.

Your child learns by watching you. Let your child choose how much to eat of foods you provide. Children copy your likes, dislikes, and your interest in trying new foods.

Be patient with your child.

Children enjoy food when eating it is their own choice. Some new foods take time. Give a taste at first and wait a bit. Let children serve themselves by taking small amounts. Offer new foods many times.

Cook together.

Eat together.

Talk together.

Make meal time family time.



food safety tips for preschoolers



10 tips to keep food safe and clean

Keeping your preschooler safe is your number one priority. Building safe habits will be valuable throughout their lives. Follow these simple tips to keep food safe and clean for your preschooler.

1 develop a healthy habit for life
Encourage handwashing after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after playing with pets, or whenever they are dirty. **Preschoolers are less likely to get sick if they wash their hands often.** Keep a stool by the sink to make handwashing easier.



2 make handwashing fun!
Sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or the "Alphabet" song or count for 20 seconds each time to make sure your child is washing long enough. Have them pick out a favorite soap to keep them interested.

3 send a safe, healthy lunch
Keep foods cold by adding a frozen juice box or small ice pack to an insulated lunch box. When using paper lunch bags, double bag to help maintain the temperature.

4 keep hot lunches hot
Use an insulated thermos to keep foods like soup warm until lunchtime. Fill your thermos with boiling water and let stand for a few minutes. Then empty the water and fill with piping hot food.



5 safe snacking
Many hands touching snacks can result in the spread of germs. Divide snacks up into small bags or buy single-serve packets. Rinse fruits and vegetables before slicing and serving them as snacks.

6 stay clean
Young children can easily get sick because their immune systems are not fully developed. Keep food and surfaces clean. Wash surfaces before and after you prepare foods like fish, meat, eggs, and cheese for your preschooler.

7 holiday eggs
Hard-cooked eggs are a fun tradition for many families. After boiling eggs, dye them in food-safe coloring and return them to the refrigerator within 2 hours to keep them safe to eat.

8 some foods are hard to swallow
Avoid foods that are hard to swallow or cut them into small pieces, about 1/2 inch. Hard-to-swallow foods can include peanuts, popcorn, round slices of hot dog, hard candy, whole grapes, and cherry tomatoes.



9 watch how they eat
To prevent choking, have your preschoolers sit down when they eat. Avoid letting them run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouth.

10 seafood for preschoolers
Omega-3 fats in fish and shellfish have important health benefits for young children. But be aware of chemicals such as mercury. Choices that are often lower in mercury include salmon, sardines, tilapia, trout, pollock, and catfish.

EATING A RAINBOW IS HEALTHY!

Red foods are good for your heart and blood health, and they support joint function.

Orange foods help prevent cancer and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Yellow foods are good for your skin, heart, and eyes, and improve digestion and your immune system.

Green foods are good for your bones, as well as detoxing the body and strengthening your immune system.

Blue and purple foods help with mineral absorption, and can improve your memory and brain function.

White foods support immunity and the circulatory system, and can reduce the risk of cancer.

Red

Fruit



Vegetables



Yellow and Orange

Fruit



Vegetables



Green

Fruit



Vegetables

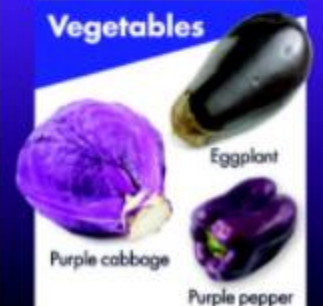


Blue and Purple

Fruit



Vegetables



Healthy Eating

for preschoolers

Daily Food Checklist



Use this Checklist as a general guide.

- This food checklist is based on average needs. Do not be concerned if your child does not eat the exact amounts suggested. Your child may need more or less than average. For example, food needs increase during growth spurts.
- Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these amounts; other days they may want more. Let your child choose how much to eat. Throughout a day, offer amounts shown below.

Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
Fruits Focus on whole fruits 	1 cup	1 – 1½ cups	1 – 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ small banana 4-5 large strawberries
Vegetables Vary your veggies 	1 cup	1 – 1½ cups	1½ – 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn
Grains Make half your grains whole grains 	3 ounces	3 – 5 ounces	4 – 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked oatmeal, rice, or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across)
Protein Foods Vary your protein routine 	2 ounces	2 – 4 ounces	3 – 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils)
Dairy Choose low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt 	2 cups	2 – 2½ cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ¾ ounce cheese

Some foods are easy to choke on while eating. Children need to sit when eating. Foods like hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots need to be cut into small pieces the size of a nickel. Be alert if serving 3- to 5-year-olds foods like popcorn, nuts, seeds, or other hard foods.

There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Checklist into meals and snacks. View the "Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas" to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler's plate at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers-meal-and-snack-patterns.

