



Family Nutrition News & Tips

Talk About the Benefits of Eating Fruit

Experts say that young children can learn that the food they eat is related to their health. Here is some conversation to share with children.

Oranges, lemons, grapefruits, and pineapples give you vitamins.

Vitamins are important for your skin and bones to grow strong and healthy.

You also need vitamins for healthy blood and a strong heart. Lots of fruits and vegetables give you vitamins.

Celebrate Healthy Eating with a Friendship Fruit Salad

Ask each family to bring in one fruit to help add to a fruit salad the class will be making. Let children help by washing and cutting the fruit.

Caterpillars love fruit and butterflies love nectar! Help your child to love eating these too!

- Kids like to dip their food. Try dipping apple, papaya, or pineapple slices in vanilla yogurt.
- Roll-ups anyone? Wrap crushed pineapple plus a thin slice of ham in a lettuce leaf. The crispy texture and sweet taste is a real treat.
- Try a sliced kiwi and peanut butter sandwich. Peanut butter should be layered lightly to avoid risk of choking.

- Fruit salad - Have your child pick out fruit in the store and then help make salad at home. Use plastic knives to cut fruit. Use fruit salad for breakfast or dessert or as a topping for yogurt, cereal, or pancakes.
- Orange Delight - Use 1 cup 100% orange juice to 1/4 cup powdered milk and three to four ice cubes. Whip in a blender and serve.
- Caterpillar Snack idea - Turn "ants on a log" into a caterpillar. Use celery topped with cream cheese and raisins for the body and pretzel sticks for the antennae.

Fruit Tips

Try to buy fresh fruit that is in season, but remember that canned and frozen fruits are also healthy choices for you and your family.

Fruit drink or fruit juice? Many of the fruit "drinks" on the grocery store shelves contain added sugar and very few nutrients. Although these drinks are okay to have on some occasions, juices marked "100% fruit juice" are the best choice. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests 6 oz. of 100% juice for a child everyday.

Can a child drink too much juice?

If you have a picky eater, too much juice or sugar-flavored beverages before a meal can depress her or his appetite. Instead, offer cold water to your thirsty child. At meals, milk is the best choice.

Is your child getting enough fruit?

Fruit provides you and your child with many nutrients like fiber and vitamin C.

According to government surveys, many young children are not eating enough fruit.





At least two fruits each day is what both you and your child need for good health. Try two of the following each day:

- OJ with breakfast
- Sliced apples with lunch
- Banana and peanut butter sandwich (Peanut butter layered lightly)
- Canned peaches with supper

Let your child choose portion sizes

Children should choose their own portion size at any meal or snack. So you may have to offer fruit several times a day to reach the total suggested below. Each day, a child four to six years old should try to eat at least 2 of the following. A child two to three years old will eat less.

1 piece of fruit

3/4 cup of juice

1/2 cup of canned fruit

1/4 cup of dried fruit



Helpful Hints for Introducing New Foods

A good way to increase the variety of foods that young children eat is to involve them in tasting new foods.

Here are some general reminders.

- Check children's records for food allergies and avoid these foods.
- Always start by having children wash their hands.
- Allow enough time so that taste-testing is not hurried.
- Cut up food into bite-size pieces and let children serve themselves.
- Taste along with children to be a positive role model.

- Let children know in advance what kind of behavior you expect. They should be allowed to say "no thank you" but not "yuck."
- Place children who are more open to trying new foods next to more reluctant tasters.
- Notice when children taste a new food and do not make a fuss if they will not try it.

Make food and health a part of everyday conversation.

Children can begin learning about nutrition and health by hearing new words. Mealtime is a great time to sneak in some nutrition wisdom. Here are examples:

"This bread has vitamins in it which help us grow and stay healthy."

"Vegetables and fruits have lots of vitamins which keep our blood and muscles healthy. Also the skin of fruits and veggies have fiber, and fiber helps us go to the bathroom."

"Meat, beans, and eggs have protein to help our muscles grow. We also have to exercise to keep our bones and muscles strong and healthy."

"Milk has calcium to help our bones grow and stay hard."



Guard Against Choking!

Watch children while they eat.