

Feeding your school age child

Your child is getting more independent. Regular meals and snacks are still important. Use these ideas to help your child start learning to manage meal and snack times.

- Have 3 meals a day at set times. Meals should last only 20 to 30 minutes.
- Let your child start to choose snacks with some rules. For example, snacks should be at set times and at the table.
- Try to keep your child from eating and drinking between meal and snack times (grazing). Try to have your child drink water between meals and snack if they are hungry.
- Set a good example. Eat regular meals that include a variety of foods.
- Try to keep meals and snacks pleasant and stress free.
- Have your child help with grocery shopping and cooking. Let your child pick out fruits and vegetables with you!
- Make eating fun and be creative. Cut foods into shapes with cookie cutters or eat breakfast foods at dinner.
- Be patient with new foods and keep offering them. It can take up to 12 tries for a child to accept a new food.
- Do not use food as a bribe or reward for your child.
- Add colorful veggies like broccoli and carrots to sauces, casseroles or soups.
- Add bright fruits such as berries to cereal or yogurt.
- Don't be a short order cook. Have your child try what the rest of the family is eating. Let them try a small portion first.



**If your child is a picky eater, talk to your doctor or dietitian about giving them an appropriate complete multivitamin.

How much should my child eat?

Use the MyPlate method to learn portion sizes.



Other helpful portion sizes

Serving size will vary for each child. It will depend on things like age, height and weight.

Food Group	Serving Size
Vegetables (2 to 4 servings per day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup cooked or raw vegetable
Fruit (2 to 3 servings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup cut up fruit • 1 piece fresh fruit (equal to the size of a baseball)
Milk/Dairy (2 to 4 servings per day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 ounces of cow's milk, enriched soy milk • 6 to 8 ounces of yogurt • 1 to 2 slices of cheese or ¼ cup cubed cheese
Grains (4 to 6 servings per day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice of bread • ½ cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta • ¾ to 1 cup cold cereal • One pancake or waffle (equal to the size of a CD)
Meat/protein (3 to 5 servings per day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 to 3 ounces of meat, chicken, turkey or fish (3 ounces is equal to the size of a deck of cards) • ¼ cup beans • 1 to 2 eggs • 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (equal to the size of a ping pong ball) • Small handful of nuts or seeds

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.