



Family Information

Food Pyramid

The Facts About Nutrition Guidelines

Healthy Portions

Some think when children are allowed to choose from large amounts of various foods during meal time, they will only eat the amount of food their body needs. Research now shows children eat more when more food is offered, regardless of their activity level, amount of calories needed, and actual hunger level. The chart to the right lists each of the main food groups and the daily recommendations for children. Children with higher physical activity levels, more than thirty minutes daily, may require more. When in doubt, always consult your pediatrician. Keep in mind that the daily allotment should be broken down throughout the day, with the goal of consuming balanced, healthy meals and snacks. Giving a toddler one cup of vegetables, two ounces of meat and two cups of milk at one meal only causes digestion difficulties. The goal is to maintain a consistent level of nutrients so the body is neither deprived nor overwhelmed. You are responsible for the amount and types of food your child consumes. Be familiar with the guidelines and



Daily Recommendations

Vegetables

Children 2-3 years old.....1 cup

Children 4-8 years old.....1 1/2 cups

Fruits

Children 2-3 years old.....1 cup

Children 4-8 years old.....1 to 1 1/2 cups

Grains

Children 2-3 years old.....3 ounces

Children 4-8 years old.....4-5 ounces

Milk

Children 2-3 years old.....2 cups

Children 4-8 years old.....2 cups

Meat & Beans

Children 2-3 years old.....2 ounces

Children 4-8 years old.....3-4 ounces

recommendations and take the time to address your own eating habits. The experiences your child has with food and nutrition now will impact him/her throughout life.

Reading Labels

In 1990, Congress passed a bill called the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA), requiring accurate nutrition labeling of most foods. Since then, nutrition labels have gained in popularity from the general public as more and more consumers are using these labels to make healthier food choices. Here are some general tips and guidelines to keep in mind:

Understand Food Label Claims: "Reduced fat" means that a product has at least twenty-five percent less fat than the same regular brand. "Light" means that it has at least fifty percent less fat than the same regular item. "Low fat" means that the item has less than three grams of fat per serving.

Serving Size & Servings Per Container:

Many people fail to notice that the popular twenty ounce bottles of soda are actually two and one-half servings! Pay careful attention to the label and what it states as a serving size. You may be very surprised to see the snack bar you enjoy should actually be divided in half!

Get Your Daily Nutritional Values:

Foods that report twenty percent or more of the daily nutritional value of any specific vitamin are a wiser choice than an item that has five percent or less.

Watch Those Calories:

With all the new diet fads and information bombarding the public, it seems surprising to hear the best and most reliable way to control weight is still through counting caloric intake. Be mindful of those empty calories, foods that are high in calories with little or no nutritional value. Pay attention to how many calories from fat are in a serving. Nutritionists recommend that no more than thirty percent of calories be consumed from fat.



Want more information on nutrition guidelines?

Try these websites:

www.kidshealth.org

www.mypyramid.gov

www.cnpp.usda.gov

www.nutrition.gov