

PRESCHOOL NUTRITION NEWS

A newsletter for preschool parents and teachers

Healthy Eating

It's important for preschoolers to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. Choose options for meals, beverages, and snacks that have limited added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

The amount of food preschoolers need depends on a variety of factors, including age, sex, and physical activity level. Use the **MyPlate Plan** as a general guide to how much they should eat from each food group every day.

Preschoolers have a wide range of normal growth; every child is different. Your child's healthcare provider will monitor their growth over time using **growth charts** and other tools. Be sure to discuss concerns you may have about your child's growth with their healthcare provider.

Every day offer me:



Grains

- 1 slice bread or tortilla
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice, or noodles
- 1 cup cold cereal
- 5 to 7 small crackers

Half the grains I eat should be whole grains.



Protein

- 1/4 cup meat, chicken, turkey, or fish
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup beans or tofu
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter

Beans, meat, chicken, turkey, and fish give me lots of iron to keep my blood strong.

Vegetables

- 1/2 cup vegetables
- 1/2 cup vegetable or tomato soup
- 4 ounces vegetable or tomato juice
- 1 cup fresh salad greens

Offer me a dark green or orange vegetable every day.



Dairy

- 4 ounces nonfat or 1% milk
- 1/2 cup lowfat yogurt
- 1 slice lowfat cheese

No more than 16 ounces of milk a day.

WIC gives me lowfat milk. It's what I need.



Fruits

- 1/2 cup fruit
- 4 ounces 100% fruit juice

Offer me a vitamin C fruit every day— oranges, strawberries, or WIC juice.

No more than 4 ounces of juice a day.



Only a little bit.





Start simple
with MyPlate



Healthy Eating for Preschoolers

Healthy eating is important at every age. Offer preschoolers a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding on foods and beverages, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Model healthy behaviors

Preschoolers tend to copy what parents or caregivers do at the table. If you eat your veggies, they'll eat their veggies. And, it's good for both of you.



Think about their drinks

Sugar-sweetened beverages like sodas and fruit drinks are sources of added sugars that are often high in calories. Beverages with no added sugars like water, unsweetened fat-free or low-fat milk (including low-lactose or lactose-free options), or fortified soy beverages should be the primary choice for children.



Prevent choking

Encourage children to sit at a table for meals and snacks and not wander around carrying food. Check out the [USDA Team Nutrition worksheet](#) for foods that are choking hazards at different ages.



Try new foods

Let children choose a new food to try at the grocery store. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. It may take up to a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food.



Get kids involved

Preschoolers can help at mealtimes by washing produce, tearing lettuce, stirring mixes, scooping ingredients, or setting the table.

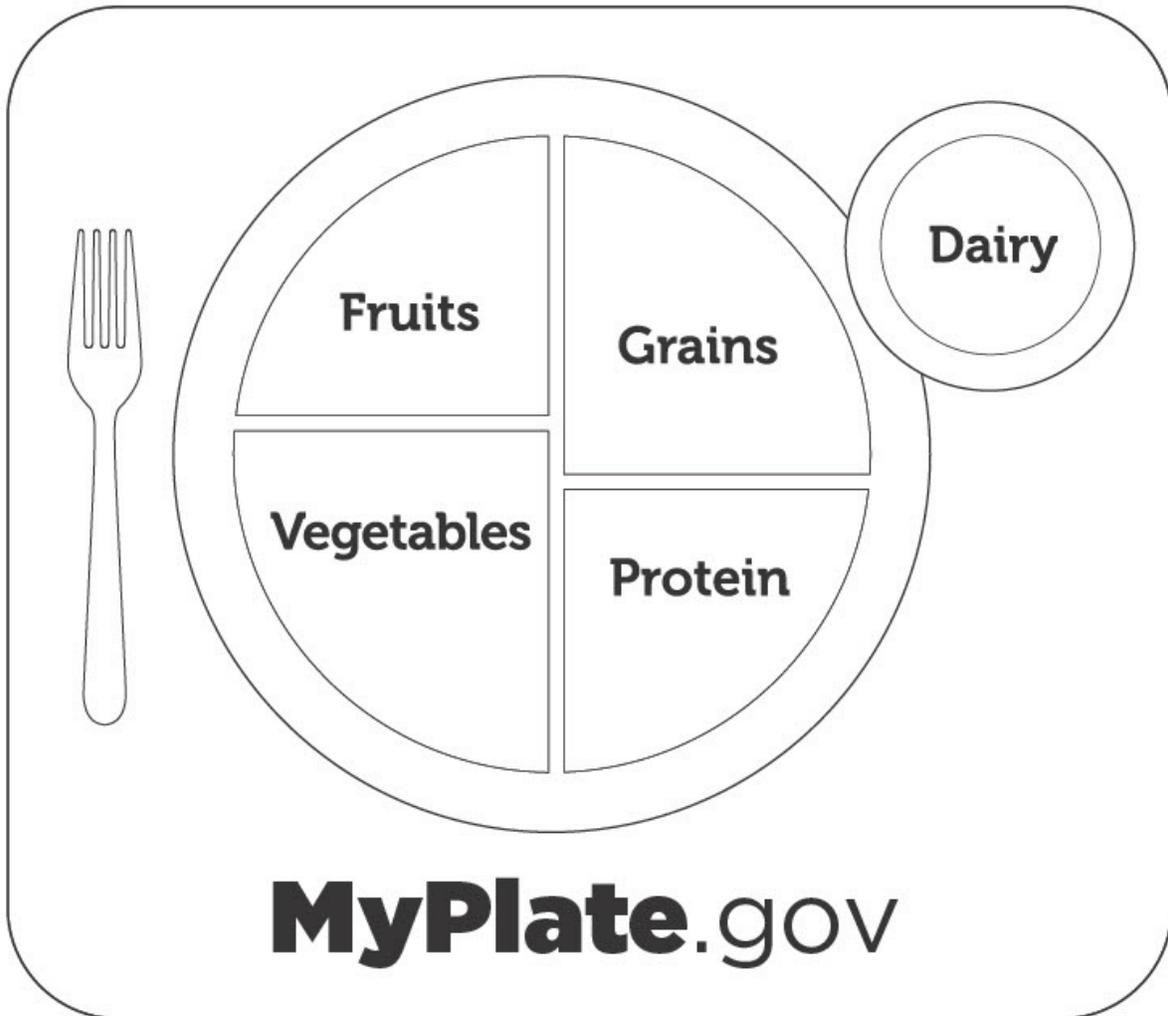


Offer choices

Like adults, preschoolers like to have a say in what they eat. "A pear or an apple?" "Whole-wheat toast or some crackers?" You offer the healthy options, but they get to choose.



Color MyPlate



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