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Feeding Children: How Much is Enough?

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Feeding Children

How Much is Enough?

Children of different ages and activity levels need different amounts of food. The more physical activity your child gets, the more calories they can consume. If your child is not very active, then fewer calories need to be consumed. To help find the balance between food and physical activity, refer below to the menus, which are based on age groups and calorie levels as recommended by the USDA's "My Pyramid."

Sample Menu for two-year olds

(1,000 calories)

- » **Breakfast:** ½ cup cooked cereal, ½ cup whole milk
- » **Snack:** 2 graham crackers, ½ cup orange juice
- » **Lunch:** ½ turkey sandwich, ½ cup green beans, ½ apple, ½ cup whole milk
- » **Snack:** ½ cup yogurt
- » **Dinner:** 2 ounces chicken, ½ cup cooked carrots or ½ cup cooked broccoli, ½ cup cooked noodles, ½ cup whole milk
- » **Snack:** animal crackers, water

Sample menu for moderately active three- to five-year-olds*

(1,400 calories)

- » **Breakfast:** 1 cup whole grain cereal, ½ cup low-fat milk, ½ cup juice
- » **Snack:** 1 slice toast with peanut butter, ½ cup low-fat milk
- » **Lunch:** Tuna Sandwich, 1 cup carrot sticks, 1 cup low-fat milk
- » **Snack:** 1 piece fruit
- » **Dinner:** Bean and cheese burrito, ½ cup rice, ½ cup tossed salad, water

Sample menu for moderately active six- to eight-year-olds*

(1,600 calories)

- » **Breakfast:** 1 cup whole grain cereal, ½ cup low fat milk, ½ cup juice
- » **Snack:** ½ cup yogurt
- » **Lunch:** grilled cheese sandwich, ½ cup vegetable soup, ½ cup lemonade
- » **Snack:** 1 piece fruit
- » **Dinner:** 2 oz grilled chicken, 1 baked potato, ½ cup green beans, whole grain roll, ½ cup low fat milk
- » **Snack:** 1 cup popcorn

* For sedentary children, reduce menu by 200 calories; for active children, add 200 calories

Sample menu for moderately active nine- to ten-year-olds*

(1,800 calories)

- » **Breakfast:** 1 cup whole grain cereal, 1 piece toast, 1 cup low fat milk, 1 piece fruit
- » **Snack:** 4 pieces celery with peanut butter; 1 cup apple juice
- » **Lunch:** turkey and cheese on whole wheat bread, 1 cup vegetable soup, 1 cup low fat milk
- » **Snack:** 1 cup low fat yogurt
- » **Dinner:** 3 oz meatloaf, 1 baked potato, ½ cup coleslaw, ½ cup broccoli, whole wheat roll, 8 oz water
- » **Snack:** 1 cup popcorn, 8 oz water

* For sedentary children, reduce menu by 200 calories; for active children, add 200 calories

Written by Louise Moore, M.S. for University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension, 2006

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