

Nutrition Lessons For A New Generation

Although the nutritional needs of children have not changed in the last 20 years, the world they live in certainly has. Kids in elementary school today are experiencing a childhood that is quite different from that of their parents. They watch more than 50 channels of TV, study at computer terminals in school and wear braces with pride! So it's important that we also update their nutrition lessons to help them form the best possible eating habits for life in the 21st century.

THE GOLDEN RULES FOR FEEDING KIDS

Some things haven't changed when it comes to raising healthy children . . .

- Eat a good meal before going off to school.
- Have plenty of time to play every day.
- Get enough rest every night.

But other traditions today's parents grew up with may need adjusting to keep pace with changing lifestyles. For example, eating meals at 8 AM, 12 NOON and 6 PM every day was a great schedule when everyone was home at those times, but that usually isn't the case anymore.

The fixed meal times of the past made it easy to plan menus which incorporated foods from each of the food groups. But when families can't eat together on a regular basis, they need a new system to help them deliver good nutrition to their children.

The Food Guide Pyramid is the best blueprint for building a balanced diet. Today's goal, like yesterday's, is to eat the recommended number of servings



Banana S'Mores
Strawberry Newtons Marsh
Nilla Cookie Sandwich

from each food group to meet individual needs.

PYRAMID FOOD GUIDE	
Servings/Day	Food Groups
6 - 11	Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta
3 - 5	Vegetables
2 - 4	Fruits
2 - 3	Milk, Yogurt and Cheese
2 - 3	Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts
In moderation	Fats, Oils and Sweets (Pyramid Tip)

PUTTING MEAL TIME ON FLEX-TIME

Without the structure of traditional meal times, parents can use more flexible schedules when feeding children. Six small feedings may work some days, while two main meals and three mini-meals are better on others.

Consider the typical school day of a 5 - 11 year old. A bagged lunch of a

sandwich, milk and a whole apple is easy to fix, but can be hard to finish in a typical 20-minute lunch period. Try packing small portions of bite-sized foods. Cheese and crackers with juice and apple slices or orange segments, or a cereal bar and yogurt are good choices and are easy to fix and eat. Then after school, a cup of vegetable soup, egg salad in a pita pocket or fruit cocktail with graham crackers can round out the menu. If your child has soccer practice from 5:00 - 7:00 PM, she could eat dinner after school and a light snack when she returns from practice.

CATERING TO CREATIVITY

Another helpful change in the way we feed our children can be in the use of creative food combinations. The very word *dinner* brings certain images to mind, just as the word *snack* does. By opening up the food selection process to everything on the Pyramid at each eating occasion, you and your children will find many more selections to match your appetites and preferences. (See chart on next page for examples.)

Think of the food choices represented on the different levels of the Food Pyramid as a master menu where you can take "one from column A and two from column B" to create a meal. This approach lets you work with what's actually on hand and how much time you and your child have to fix and eat the meal. You can use the suggestions in the chart any time of day.

MAKE ROOM FOR EVERYTHING

Generations of parents have tried unsuccessfully to convince their kids there are only two kinds of food: "good for you" and "bad for you." This was,

NUTRITION UPDATE

and is, an unhelpful classification. Instead, parents are encouraged to spend more time teaching their children moderation and that no food has to be eliminated.

Just as we remind our children they need three servings of milk or two to four servings of fruit every day, we must show them how favorites such as cookies or ice cream fit into their eating patterns. What matters most is that the child eats the recommended servings of all the foods in the Pyramid and has the chance to be physically active every day.

If a child is gaining too much weight, it probably indicates the need for more activity and fewer servings from the Fats, Oils and Sweets category.

Taking a more flexible approach to feeding young children means better choices can be made at every eating occasion. By providing meals and snacks that demonstrate variety, balance and moderation, you will help your children develop eating habits that will adapt to their changing schedules as they grow older. Striking the right balance is what good nutrition is all about.



Try the following recipes for fun snack ideas.

BANANA S'MORES

Makes 4 servings
(pictured)

- 8 HONEY MAID® Honey Grahams squares
- 1 medium banana, cut into 16 slices
- 1/4 cup miniature marshmallows
- 2 teaspoons reduced-fat chocolate baking chips

Top each of 4 graham cracker squares with 4 banana slices. Arrange 1 tablespoon of marshmallows over top of each banana layer; sprinkle with chips. Top with remaining graham cracker squares. Microwave 25 to 35 seconds or until marshmallows are puffed.

NUTRITION INFORMATION per serving: 100 calories, 2 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 96 mg sodium, 1 g dietary fiber.

STRAWBERRY NEWTONS MUNCH

Makes 9 servings
(pictured)

- 2 cups air-popped popcorn
- 12 Fat Free Strawberry NEWTONS® Fruit Chewy Cookies, quartered
- 1 cup Reduced Fat FLANTERS® Cheez Curls
- 1/3 cup dark seedless raisins

In bowl, toss together all ingredients. Store in airtight container.

NUTRITION INFORMATION per 1/2 cup serving: 104 calories, 1 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 1 mg cholesterol, 117 mg sodium, 2 g dietary fiber.

NILLA COOKIE SUNDAE

Makes 6 servings
(pictured)

- 6 paper muffin-pan liners
- 3 cups nonfat vanilla frozen yogurt
- 24 Reduced Fat NILLA® Wafers
- 6 tablespoons fat-free fudge ice cream topping
- 1/2 cup strawberries, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups fat-free prepared whipped topping

Line six (6-ounce) custard cups with paper muffin-pan liners. Place 1 scoop (1/2 cup) frozen yogurt into each custard cup. Arrange 4 cookies around each scoop*. Top with fudge topping, strawberries and whipped topping. Serve immediately.

* Recipe may be prepared up to this point and frozen until serving time.

NUTRITION INFORMATION per serving: 245 calories, 1 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 3 mg cholesterol, 207 mg sodium, 1 g dietary fiber.

CREATIVE COMBINATIONS

FOOD GROUPS FEATURED

3 crumb-coated chicken nuggets with 5 cherry tomatoes	Bread, Meat and Vegetable
1 cup macaroni and cheese with 1/2 cup applesauce	Bread, Milk and Fruit
1 cup tomato rice soup and 4 vanilla wafers with chocolate milk	Vegetable, Bread and Milk
1 flour tortilla filled with peanut butter and sliced banana	Bread, Meat Alternative and Fruit
6 crackers and 2 slices cheese with 15 seedless grapes	Bread, Milk and Fruit
2 fig bars or 1 cereal bar with 6 ounces yogurt	Bread and Milk
1 cup cereal, 2 Tbsp. each raisins, peanuts and chocolate coated candies	Bread, Fruit, Meat Alternative and Pyramid Tip
1 toaster waffle with 1/2 cup each cottage cheese and canned peaches	Bread, Milk and Fruit
1/2 cup vegetarian baked beans in taco shell with shredded cheese	Meat Alternative, Bread and Milk
10 French fries and a veggie or garden burger on bun	Vegetable, Meat Alternative and Bread
1 fruit juice popsicle and a soft pretzel	Fruit and Bread
1 ear of corn with margarine and 2 fish sticks	Vegetable, Pyramid Tip and Meat

Comments:

Today's Date:

Follow-up Date: