

Client Name _____ Date _____

RDN/NDTR _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Nutrition and Feeding Tips for Preschool Children Ages 4-5 Years

Daily Food Guidelines

The following chart shows suggested daily food recommendations for children ages 4 to 5 years. Your registered dietitian nutritionist will adjust these recommendations based on your child's needs.

Food Group	Total Recommended Servings Per Day	1 Serving Equals . . .
Milk and Milk Products	4	¾ cup milk or yogurt ¾ ounce cheese
Meat and Other Protein Foods	2	1 ounce beef, pork, poultry, or fish 4-5 tablespoons beans or nuts 1 small egg
Grains	6	1 slice bread ½ bagel or bun ½ cup ready-to-eat cereal, cooked cereal, rice or pasta
Vegetables	2	¼-½ cup cooked, canned, or fresh chopped vegetables ½ cup 100% juice
Fruits	2	½-1 small fruit ¼-½ cup cooked, canned, or fresh chopped fruit ½ cup 100% juice ½ cup berries
Fats and Oils	3	1 teaspoon added butter, margarine, or oil

Tips

You are responsible for deciding what, when, and where your child will eat. Your child is responsible for deciding how much to eat. Understanding these responsibilities will likely help you to avoid struggles and control issues related to meals and snacks.

- Meet your child's daily fruit and vegetables goals by serving fresh, canned, or frozen whole fruits and vegetables instead of juice. If you offer juice, it should be 100% fruit juice, combined with a whole fruit, and limited to 4-6 ounces per day.
- Preschool children need about 5 daily cups of fluid per day from plain water or milk.
- Serve mostly plain water with meals/snacks or when your child says they are thirsty.
- Avoid sweet or sticky foods that remain in the mouth for a long time, as these cause cavities.
- Limit high-sugar and high-salt foods. These foods should be given only as a rare treat and should not replace more nutritious foods in meals or snacks.

Mealtime Feeding Tips

Before the meal

- Involve your child in meal planning, coupon cutting, food shopping, and food preparation. They can help you with tasks such as setting the table, breaking eggs, or loading the dishwasher.
- Make sure the eating area is quiet, pleasant, and safe for meals and snacks. Turn off the TV or radio so your child is not distracted.
- Plan a few minutes of quiet time before each meal. A tired or excited child may not be interested in eating.
- Make sure your child washes their hands before meals and snacks.
- Seat your child at a table for both meals and snacks, because it is not safe to allow him or her to eat while walking or playing. Make sure the seat is at a good height for her or him to be comfortable and have the feet supported. The table should be at your child's stomach level.

During the meal

- Serve meals and snacks at about the same time every day. Give your child enough time to become hungry between meals and snacks.
- Always supervise your child during meals and snacks.
- Serve your child most of the foods that the rest of the family is eating.
- Provide small portions and allow your child to ask for seconds if still hungry. Serving sizes for preschool children are typically $\frac{1}{4}$ of an adult's serving size.
- Don't worry if your child wants to skip a meal. Children usually make up for missed nutrients at later meals or over the course of a couple of days.
- Serve foods warm and not too hot.
- Preschoolers usually do not like foods to be combined or put together—do not worry if your child wants to take apart sandwiches and pizza.

- Model healthy eating habits and manners. Remember, your child will follow your example. Teaching healthy eating habits and manners can be a regular part of mealtimes.
- Avoid using desserts and sweets as a reward for finishing a meal. Dessert as a reward may increase your child’s taste for sweet foods.
- Allow your child to leave the table when they are done eating. Pick a designated area where the child can play quietly.

Tips to Encourage your Child to Try New Foods

- You may need to offer a new food several times before your child will try it.
- Offer just one bite of a new food.
- It is best not to trick, bribe, or force a child into trying a new food.
- Provide a mix of favorite foods, along with a small amount of new or previously disliked foods.
- Children’s preferences and appetite often change so try reintroducing foods after several days or weeks have passed.

Foods Recommended and Foods Not Recommended

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods Not Recommended
Grains	Whole grains, such as whole wheat, brown rice, barley, oatmeal, or bulgur, for at least half of daily grain servings.	Fried snack foods such as chips or pastries
Protein Foods	Tender, well-cooked lean beef, pork, or poultry Fish Eggs Nuts or nut butter Soybeans, lentils, dried peas, beans (well cooked)	Meat that is undercooked or served in chunks or larger than bite-sized pieces
Dairy and Dairy Alternatives	Plain, pasteurized 1% or fat-free (skim) milk Fortified soy milk	Sweetened flavored milk, such as chocolate or strawberry

	Reconstituted powdered milk Low-fat yogurt Regular or low-fat cheeses	Unfortified non-dairy milks such as almond, rice, or soy Toddler formulas
Vegetables	All types, especially dark-green and orange vegetables	Raw carrots
Fruit	All fruits	Dried fruit that is not well chopped
Fats and Oils	Heart-healthy vegetable oils, such as olive oil or canola oil Fats and oils with omega-3 fatty acids	Limit added fats and oils to less than 3 teaspoons per day
Beverages	Plain Water	All sweetened beverages, such as soft drinks, soda pop, fruit drinks, fruit-flavored drinks, fruitades, sport drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters, and sweetened coffee and tea beverages Beverages with low-calorie sweeteners (such as diet soda or flavored waters) Caffeinated beverages

Notes:

Preschool Children Ages 4-5 Years Sample 1-Day Menu

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¾ cup oatmeal ¼ cup raisins ¾ cup 1% milk
Morning Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ peanut butter and jelly sandwich made with: 1 slice whole wheat bread 1 tablespoon peanut butter 1 teaspoon jam 1 mandarin orange ¾ cup plain water
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¾ ounce cheese ½ cup steamed carrots 1 small banana ½ cup 1% milk ½ cup plain water
Afternoon Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¾ cup yogurt ¼ cup granola ¼ cup strawberries ½ cup plain water
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 ounces chicken 2 tablespoons green beans ¼ cup mashed potatoes 1 small whole-grain dinner roll 1 teaspoon margarine, soft, tub ¾ cup 1% milk ½ cup plain water
Evening Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ cup applesauce 5 whole-grain crackers ½ cup plain water

Notes:

Sample Meal Plan

Use this form to create an individualized meal plan.

Meal	Menu
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snack	

Notes: