

HEALTHY EATING FOR CHILDREN

Dear Parent/Guardian,

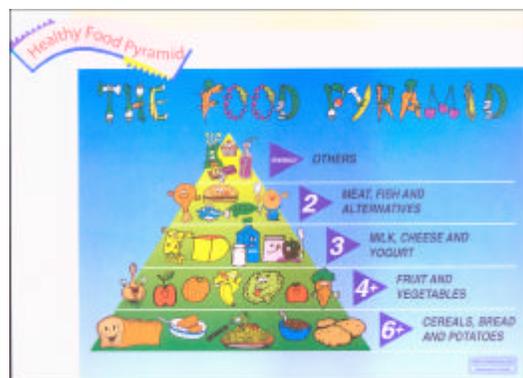
Many of the choices you make for your children today will influence their health in the future. One decision you make everyday involves the choice and preparation of meals, particularly school lunches. Healthy eating habits started in childhood will stay with your children forever and influence their chances of a healthier life.

Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Therefore they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre.

This leaflet was produced to provide you with information and some useful ideas to fill healthy well balanced lunch boxes. The suggested lunches are easy to prepare and inexpensive. The leaflet also contains an example of a day's eating pattern containing healthy food choices for your children.

We hope that this leaflet will assist you in achieving a healthy eating pattern for your family.

Healthy food pyramid



The Healthy Food Pyramid is a fun way of teaching your children about the different food groups.

The pyramid is divided into five shelves, each representing a different food group. Choosing a variety of foods from each shelf ensures that your children have a balanced and healthy diet.

You should select most of your children's foods from the bottom two shelves of the Healthy Food Pyramid. Smaller amounts of food should be chosen from the next two shelves, while foods at the top of the pyramid should be taken sparingly.

Healthy servings

The following is a list of suggested servings from each of the food groups in the Healthy Food Pyramid. Each represents one serving. The recommended number of daily servings are indicated beside each food group.

Cereals, bread and potatoes group 6+

- 1 oz slice wholemeal bread or breakfast cereal
- 1 small bread roll
- 1 small scone – plain/brown/fruit
- 2 wholegrain cream crackers or crispbread
- 1 oz plain popcorn
- 1 medium-sized potato – boiled or baked
- 2 tablespoons boiled rice or pasta

Children and teenagers may require additional amounts from the Cereals, Bread and Potatoes Group for physical activity and growth.

Fruit and vegetable group 4+

- 1 medium-sized fresh fruit, e.g. apple, orange, banana, pear
- 1/2 glass unsweetened fruit juice
- Salad vegetables, e.g. tomato, lettuce, cucumber, carrot, celery
- Vegetable sticks made with carrot, pepper, celery, cucumber
- 2 tablespoons cooked vegetables or salad
- bowl of home-made vegetable soup

Milk, cheese and yogurt group 3

- 1/3 pint milk
- 1 carton yogurt
- 1 oz cheddar/Edam/Blarney cheese
- 2 cheese singles

Meat, fish and alternatives group 2

- 2 oz lean cooked meat, beef, lamb, ham, corned beef
- 2 oz chicken/turkey
- 3 oz fish, tuna, mackerel, sardines
- 2 eggs (not more than 7 per week)
- 2 oz pate (low fat)
- 1 oz peanut butter
- 4 oz baked beans

| How many servings from the food pyramid did you have today? | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cereals, bread and potatoes group | Fruit and vegetables group | Milk, cheese and yogurt group | Meat, fish and alternatives group |
| Total : | Total: | Total: | Total: |

Healthy light lunches

Monday's lunch is fun and good to eat

1 glass or small carton of milk
Peanut butter sandwich on wholemeal bread
1 orange

Tuesday's lunch leaves time for playing

Flask of soup
Pate or tuna roll
Carrot and celery sticks
1 mandarin or grapes

Wednesday's lunch is nice and filling

1 glass or carton of unsweetened fruit juice
Corned beef sandwich on wholemeal bread
1 yogurt
Popcorn

Thursday's lunch is hard to beat

Cheese on wholegrain scone
1 apple
1 glass of water, or milk, or fruit juice

Friday's lunch and off we go "free for two days in a row"

1 glass or carton of unsweetened fruit juice
Egg and salad sandwich on wholemeal bread or filled pita bread
1 banana or pear

Our light lunches are healthy, yet they cost less than 50p.
Use lettuce or slices of tomatoes or cucumber to brighten up a sandwich, and for added vitamin C.

Healthy main meals

Suggested meal plan for 5-10 year olds

Breakfast
The most important meal of your child's day

Fresh fruit or unsweetened fruit juice
Breakfast cereal, e.g. wholegrain/bran type or porridge

Wholemeal bread, butter/margarine spread thinly –preferably low fat.
Jam/marmalade
Milk or tea

Lunch

Should provide one third of your child's food requirements for the day.

Meat, fish, chicken or combination dishes, e.g. pizza, quiche
Bread for sandwiches – rolls, pita, soda bread
Fresh fruit/yogurt
1 glass or carton of milk or unsweetened fruit juice

Dinner

Adapt your favourite recipes into healthy, balanced dishes.

Home-made vegetable soup
Lean meat or chicken or fish
Good serving of vegetables or salad
Boiled/baked potatoes or boiled rice/pasta
Fresh fruit/stewed fruit/milk pudding/yogurt
1 glass of water
Milk or tea

Bedtime/between meals

Cup of milk and small snack, e.g. wholegrain cracker, scone, plain biscuit

Healthy eating

Dos and don'ts of good eating for children

DO eat regular meals, not one big meal each day
DO eat as wide a variety of food as possible
DO eat breakfast every day
DO eat more fruit, vegetables and salad foods
DO eat wholegrain cereals and bread
DO drink plenty of water
DO use mayonnaise/salad creams/salt sparingly
DO remember to brush your teeth after breakfast and at bedtime
DON'T skip meals or eat lots of snacks each day
DON'T eat fried foods. Grilled instead.
DON'T eat sweets, cakes and biscuits too often. Have them as occasional treats.

Healthy recipes

Family salad

8 oz boiled potatoes (cold)
1 small lettuce, shredded or cut up
1 red apple, sliced
1 onion, chopped
8 oz carrots, cut into small pieces
8 oz cold cooked chicken or other meat, cut into small pieces
4 hard boiled eggs

Cut the potatoes into chunks and place all the salad ingredients, except the eggs, into a bowl. Mix together. Cut the eggs into quarters and add to the salad. Serve with French dressing.

Soda bread plait

8 oz self-raising flour
1 oz soft margarine
1/4 pint milk
1 egg beaten
1 oz poppy or sesame seeds, if liked

This recipe can be used for a pizza base or for scones.

Turn on the oven to gas mark 7, 425°F, 220°C.
Put the flour and baking powder into a bowl and mix together. Rub in the margarine.

Make a hole in the centre and pour in the milk.
Mix well together. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead. Divide into 3 equal parts.
Roll out each part into a sausage shape about 2cm long. Press the top ends together and plait.
Press the bottom ends together.
Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with the poppy seeds. Bake on a tray in the centre of the oven for about 20 minutes.

Community Nutrition Services

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North Western Health Board (Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal)
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North Eastern Health Board (Meath, Louth, Cavan, Monaghan)
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Midland Health Board (Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath)
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Western Health Board (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon)
Tel: 091 751131

South Eastern Health Board (Carlow, Kilkenny)
Tel: 056 61400

Mid-Western Health Board (Limerick, Tipperary, Clare)
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Southern Health Board (Cork, Kerry)
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