

Tip Sheet Healthy Active

A GLADSTONE REGION COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE

NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN

Good food is essential for normal physical and cognitive development among children. Children have special nutritional requirements. It is important that they consume of a variety of nutritious foods as a part of a healthy balanced diet in order to meet these requirements. The nutrients obtained from these foods are not only vital for normal growth and development, but also they provide children with the energy required for everyday activity. Poor nutrition in childhood is difficult to make up later in life. Children should be encouraged to eat a diverse range of foods from each food group, including breads and cereals, vegetables, fruit, milk products and alternatives, lean meat, fish, poultry, nuts and legumes, to meet their individual needs.

The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents are designed to assist parents and children in choosing foods that promote healthy growth and development.

The guidelines are as follows:

- Encourage and support breastfeeding.
- Children and adolescents need sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally, growth should be checked regularly.
- Physical activity is important for children and adolescents.
- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods. Children and adolescents should be encouraged to:
 - ⇒ Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits.
 - ⇒ Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain.
 - ⇒ Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives.
 - ⇒ Include milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives. Reduced fat milks are not suitable for young children aged under 2 years, because of their high energy needs, but reduced fat varieties should be encouraged for older children and adolescents.
 - ⇒ Choose water as a drink.

Care should be taken to:

- Care for your child's food; prepare and store it safely.
- Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake. Low fat diets are not suitable for infants.
- Choose foods low in salt and consume only moderate amounts of sugars and food containing added sugars.



The number of serves of each food children should eat each day varies slightly, depending on body size and activity level. The general guidelines are as follow:

	Cereals	Vegetables	Fruit	Dairy	Protein
CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS					
4-7 yrs	5-7	2	1	2	½
8-11 yrs	6-9	3	1	2	1
12-18 yrs	5-11	4	3	3	1

Some examples of a serving size include:

Cereals

2 slices of bread, 1 medium bread roll, 1 cup of cooked rice, pasta or noodles, 1 cup of breakfast cereal flakes or ½ cup of muesli.

Vegetables

½ cup of cooked vegetables, 1 cup of salad vegetables or 1 medium potato.

Fruit

1 medium-sized piece of fruit; eg, apple, orange or banana, 2 pieces of smaller fruit; eg, apricots, plums or kiwi fruit, 1 cup of canned diced fruit, 1 ½ tablespoons of sultanas or ½ cup of 100% fruit juice.

Dairy (including: milks, yogurt, cheese and alternatives)

1 cup of milk, 40 grams of cheese, 200 grams of yoghurt, 1 cup of custard or 1 cup of calcium-fortified soy milk.

Protein (including meat, fish, poultry and alternatives)

65-100g of cooked meat or chicken, 80-120g of cooked fish, 2 small eggs, 1/3 cup of cooked lentils, chickpeas or canned beans or 1/3 cup of peanuts or almonds.²

¹VicHealth. Children and families. *Go for your life*. [Online] 15 May 2006. [Cited: 02 March 2011.]

²Ageing, Australian Government Department of Health and. *Food for Health . Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*. 2003.

³Queensland Health. *Fun not Fuss with Food*. *Queensland Health* . [Online] 2005. [Cited: 02 March 2011]

UPCOMING SURVEY

Communities for Children (C4C) will be conducting a survey of Gladstone Region Childcare centres, kindergartens and schools. Over the next few months a C4C staff member will visit your playgroup with the survey. C4C would appreciate your assistance in this process. The data collected from the survey will provide important information for input into the next phase of Gladstone Region C4C.

DRINKS FOR CHILDREN

Plain cool water is the best drink for children. Encourage children to drink water and some plain milk as their regular drinks.

To make water more appealing try out these popular ideas: use novelty water bottles with the child's favourite cartoon or action figure; add novelty shaped ice cubes frozen with fruit slices or diet cordial; or just add fruit slices like orange or mandarin to the cold water.



SANDWICH SUSHI

Ingredients

8 slices bread, crusts removed	310g can creamed corn
4 slices double smoked ham	1 carrot, peeled & grated
1 cucumber, cut into strips	200g can salmon, flaked
2 tablespoons mayonnaise	2 to 3 lettuce leaves, shredded
1 avocado, cut into long strips	

Method

Place bread onto a flat surface. Use a rolling pin to flatten bread slightly. Spread corn over 4 slices, leaving a 2cm strip free of filling along 1 edge. Top with ham, carrot and cucumber. Roll up to enclose filling. Cut each sandwich into 3 rounds.

Place salmon and mayonnaise into a bowl. Mix gently to combine. Arrange lettuce over remaining 4 slices of bread, leaving a 2cm strip free of filling along 1 edge. Top with salmon mixture and avocado. Roll up to enclose filling. Cut each sandwich into 3 rounds.

Wrap all sandwiches in plastic wrap. Store in the fridge until ready to pack into lunch boxes.



FUSSY EATING

Developing a healthy relationship with food from an early age is very important. Eating habits established in childhood are likely to continue into adulthood. Families and carers play a vital role in influencing the food choices of children.³

Many children may develop fussy eating behaviours at some stage. It is a common concern among parents.³ Fussy eating can be a normal part of a child's development and may not always mean a child does not like a particular food. Refusing to eat food may be used as a way to demonstrate independence.¹ The acceptance of the new tastes and textures of different foods takes time and patience. A healthy child will never starve itself, so it is important to trust that your child knows when he or she has eaten enough.³

It is important to remember that:

- Children need to enjoy food and eating.
- A child's food intake will often vary from day to day. Children are very good at responding to their level of hunger and recognising the signs of fullness.
- Growth and activity levels will influence food intake. Food intake may increase when growth and activity levels increase.
- Children are likely to eat less if they are tired or have eaten snacks close to mealtimes.
- Children are also likely to eat less if they have consumed a large volume of high energy drinks such as cordial, soft drinks and milk.
- Children should not be pressured into eating nor should food be used as a bribe or a reward.³

TIPS FOR FUSSY EATERS

- Include a variety of foods from between and within each of the food groups to ensure your child is getting all the nutrients they need. It is possible to get similar nutrients from a number of different foods within each food group.
- Serve your child the same foods as the rest of the family; separate meals are not necessary.
- Remove distractions by turning off the television and putting toys out of reach.
- Eat together at the family table whenever possible. Children learn by watching and imitating others.
- Offer new foods in a calm and relaxed environment with familiar foods your child likes.
- Allow your child to explore food by touching and where possible feeding themselves.
- Re-offer foods if refused initially. It can take several attempts for children to accept new foods. Avoid offering alternative if food refused.

"Be a positive role model, eat well and your child will learn from you".

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