



# Nutrition Tips for Children, Youth and Teens

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With the slew of new products on store shelves, the “creative” marketing by food manufacturers and the constant headlines about the latest nutrition research, it’s no wonder most of us feel like we are trying to drink water from a fire hydrant when it comes to nutrition and food choices. A good rule of thumb I like to share is *the basics have never changed*. Eat more from the plant kingdom (fruits, vegetables, beans, grains,) enjoy lean and fresh protein sources, eat minimally processed foods, eat a variety of foods in moderation, and if the claim on the label seems too good to be true? Well, then it probably is. As author Micheal Pollan says “if it comes from a plant, eat it. If it’s made in a plant, don’t. “

Normal eating means being exposed to a wide variety of foods. It’s okay to give your kids “not as healthy of foods” from time to time. Restriction is not the way to raise a child to have a healthy relationship with food. Focus on the 80/20 rule for meals which is described in more detail in the ICYP “Family Nutrition” informational document.

## Watch added sugars

Sugar is in everything. Ready to eat cereals, soda, sports drinks, yogurt, pasta sauce and the list goes on. According to the *American Academy of Pediatrics*, persons over the age of two years should not get more than 25 grams of added sugar a day. This is approximately six teaspoons. (2)

Keep in mind, this is *added* sugar, not foods that contain natural sugar. Natural sugar is found in fruit, vegetables, dairy products and some grains. To find out the added sugar in a product, you can look at the nutrition facts label.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

This product contains 2 grams of natural sugar and 10 grams of added. The 2 grams of natural sugar do not count towards the added sugar limit.

Image: FDA.gov



**Stay hydrated**

Plain water is ideal in most situations. Rarely is a sports drink ever needed, if at all, especially for children and youth. Water recommendations will vary but here are some general guidelines. Active individuals or when the temperature is hot, means they will need more. A good indication of hydration is urine color. Light colored urine (think clear or lemonade) is okay, darker urine can indicate your child is at risk for dehydration.

Age	Cups of fluid
Children 1-3 years	4 cups (some may include milk)
Children 4-8 years	5 cups
Youth 8-12 years	7-8 cups
Teens	11-15 cups

Source: healthychildren.org

Dehydration can happen rapidly. In fact, even a two percent decrease in body weight can signal dehydration. Sometimes you can even lose this overnight. Drinking water upon waking is a good idea for everyone.

- Dehydration or a  $\geq 2\%$  decrease in body weight can cause altered split-second decision making (2) and an increase in
- core body temperature (small bodies over heat quicker)
  - heart rate
  - perceived exertion (things seem harder than what they really are) and
  - use of muscle glycogen stores

**Eat breakfast**

A healthy breakfast should consist of whole grains which are high in B vitamins that help to unlock your body's natural energy and protein to keep you satisfied longer. Breakfast is also a great time to get some fruit, low-fat dairy/dairy substitute or even veggies! The smaller the child, the smaller the serving size. A good rule of thumb is to use a child's palm as one serving. The examples below show servings for older youth and teens.

**Breakfast of a Champion Blueprint**  
**1-2 servings whole grain**  
**1 serving fruit**  
**1-2 servings protein**  
**1 serving low-fat dairy/dairy substitute**

- Tortilla spread with peanut butter and wrapped around a banana with 1 cup milk/milk sub.
- Frozen Breakfast Burrito\* with grapes and yogurt
- Greek yogurt topped with fresh berries and whole grain English muffin, toasted with no sugar added jam
- High protein oatmeal (Kashi Go Lean®) made with milk. Add in dried fruit.
- Mix peanut butter, honey and raisins into 1 cup cooked quinoa. Drink with 1 cup milk/milk sub.
- Toss dried fruit and a handful of nuts in with air-popped popcorn. Have with yogurt.
- Toast two whole grain waffles and top with Nutella and sliced banana, have with 1 cup milk/milk sub and 1 piece string cheese
- 1 cup of cottage cheese with sliced pineapple, 1 mini bagel with light cream cheese and 1 cup calcium fortified orange juice
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, whole grain granola bar with an apple and 16 ounces low-fat chocolate milk/milk sub
- Smoothie: Juice Plus+® protein powder with 1 cup milk of choice, frozen fruit, baby spinach

\* Accepted brands include GOOD Food Made SIMPLE and evol. Or make your own and freeze.



### **Eat more fruits and vegetables\***

Yes, I know we hear this all the time but that is because, its true. Every single medical organization on the planet says this for a reason. It is critical that all kids are exposed and eat a wide variety of colors when it comes to fruits and vegetables. In fact, some government entities like the USDA suggest aiming for 7-13 servings daily. If your kids struggle to eat fruits and vegetables, include them in the selection process at the store, be patient and introduce one new fruit or vegetable every few days and don't stress if they don't like it the first, second, third or tenth time. Just keep introducing and being patient.

**\*NOTE:** If your child struggles with fruits and vegetables, there is a simple solution. For questions or more information, please contact Jen DeWall RDN, CSSD, LD or schedule a complimentary 15-minute sports nutrition coaching call.

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### References

1. Koriath, Trisha. AAP News. American Academy of Pediatrics. 31/07/23. *Publications.aap.org*.
2. Position of the American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada, and the American College of Sports Medicine: Nutrition and Athletic Performance. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, March 2009, Volume 109 Number 3 p. 509-522