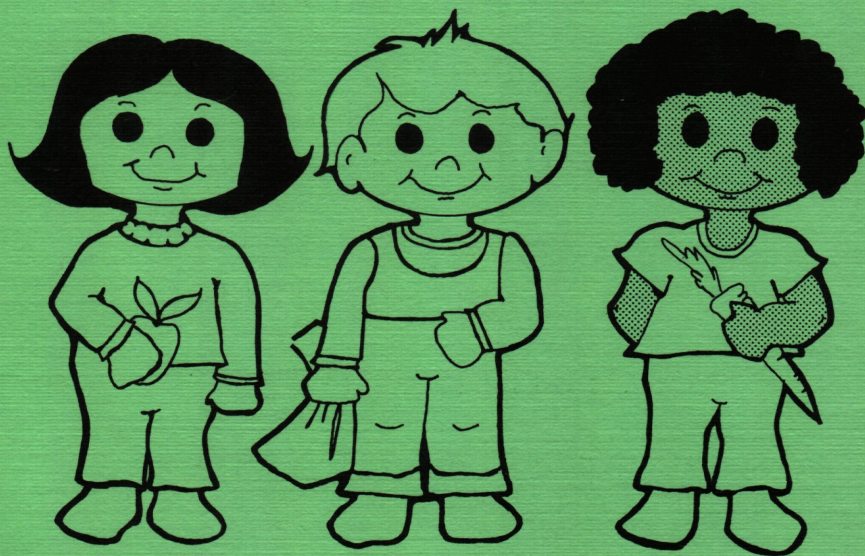

FOOD FOR THE PRESCHOOLER

Volume I



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HIGHLIGHTS

APPETITE CONCERNS

SERVING SIZES

DAILY FOOD GUIDE

**IRON,
THE HARD-TO-GET
NUTRIENT**

**PLANNING THE
MEALTIME SETTING**

FINGER FOODS

WHY BREAKFAST?

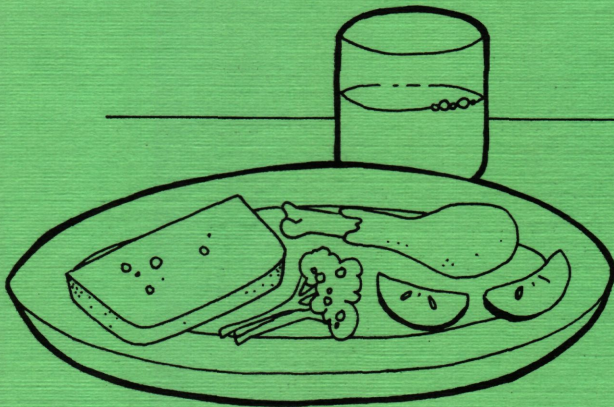
DOES YOUR CHILD'S APPETITE CONCERN YOU?

Parents are often concerned about changes in their child's appetite. Preschoolers are not growing as fast as they did in infancy and their appetites reflect this. Small appetites may also result from a child being overly tired, excited, ill, or in strange surroundings.



Your child will be more likely to meet his or her nutritional needs if the foods that are eaten are nutritious ones — fruits, vegetables, protein foods, unsweetened cereals, etc. Since no one food contains all the nutrients our bodies need, serve a wide variety of foods to be sure your child's diet is nutritionally complete.

LITTLE PEOPLE NEED LITTLE SERVINGS.



Large portions can reduce appetites. So remember, **KEEP PORTIONS SMALL!** Serve a bit less than you think your child can eat and let him or her come back for more. Not only will your child feel successful, but less food will be wasted. Suggested first serving sizes for preschoolers are:

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk

$\frac{1}{2}$ -1 slice whole grain or enriched bread

1 tablespoon of each per year of age:

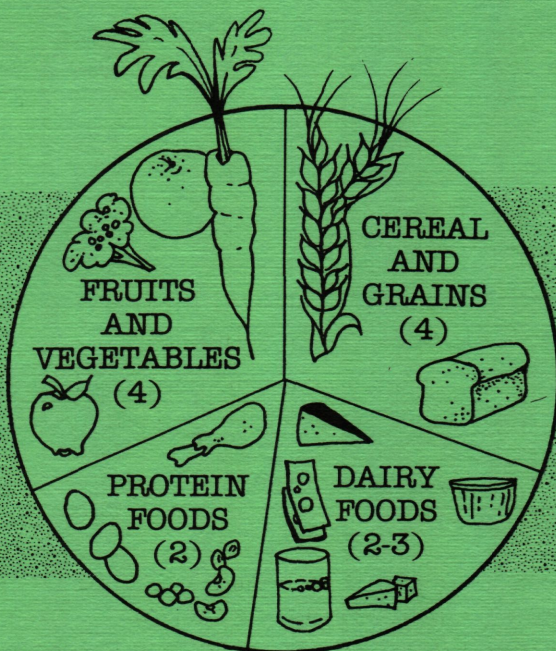
-fruit

-vegetable

-protein food

DAILY FOOD GUIDE

There is no need to plan a special meal for your preschooler, as he or she will generally enjoy eating the same foods as the rest of the family. Preschool children should have the following number of servings from each of the four food groups daily:



Fruits and Vegetables

4 OR MORE SERVINGS DAILY



Include one serving of a food high in Vitamin C daily.

- Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruits), cantaloupes, strawberries, raw cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower are high in Vitamin C.

Include one serving of a food high in Vitamin A at least every other day.

- Dark green leafy and deep yellow vegetables and fruits (e.g., winter squash, carrots, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, apricots) are high in Vitamin A.

Include two or more servings of other fruits and vegetables daily (raw or unsweetened fruit and fruit juices, fresh or frozen vegetables, potatoes).

Cereals and Grains

4 OR MORE SERVINGS DAILY



Whole grain (e.g., whole wheat) and enriched breads, cereals, and grains (e.g., oatmeal, cornmeal, pasta, rice).

Protein Foods

2 OR MORE SERVINGS DAILY



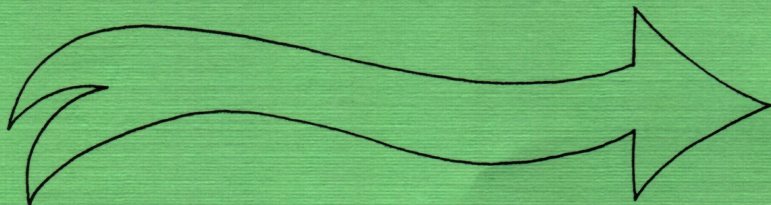
Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans or peas, lentils, nuts, or nut butter (e.g., peanut butter).

Few foods contain iron in large amounts, so it is difficult for young children to get all the iron they need. Good sources of iron include liver, braunschweiger or liverwurst, dry beans, beef, chicken, raisins, and whole wheat and enriched grain products.

Non-meat sources of iron are not absorbed well by the body. The amount of iron absorbed from plant sources can be increased up to four times, however, when these foods are combined with a food high in Vitamin C. For example, serving broccoli with chili or half an orange with split pea soup, not only provides a good source of Vitamin C, but makes the iron in the bean dishes more available for use by the body.

Liver is an excellent source of iron and can be cooked, then grated into meat or casseroles for an iron-rich, low cost main dish.

The following recipe has been well accepted by children (and staff) in day care centers. Adults strongly influence children's food acceptances, so if you are a "liver hater", remember to present the beef/liver mixture positively. Take a bite yourself - you may be surprised!



GROUND BEEF/LIVER BURGERS

(10 - 12 servings)

1 pound liver
2 pounds ground beef
1 cup oatmeal
1 egg
1 tablespoon onion, minced
8 ounces tomato sauce
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon celery seed
¼ teaspoon pepper
Basil, oregano optional

Parboil liver until firm (about 10 minutes), cool, and grate or grind. Mix all ingredients together. Form into patties and fry until brown on each side. If desired, put into a loaf pan and bake at 350° F for 1 hour. Use the ground meat mixture for chili, tacos, and spaghetti.

PLANNING THE PHYSICAL SETTING

Children eat better in comfortable surroundings. Proper-fitting furniture is important to this comfort. Since dangling feet are tiring, your child's chair should provide firm support for feet and legs.

Be sure to provide child-sized, non-breakable eating ware. A small, broad-based cup (4-6 oz.) is easy for children to hold and will help avoid spills. Forks should have broad, short handles and short, blunt tines. Spoons should have short handles and shallow bowls. Let preschoolers practice using a table knife. Even older preschoolers will have trouble cutting some foods (don't hesitate to help!), but they can use knives for spreading and cutting softer foods. Disposable dishes and cups encourage spills and are difficult for young children to use.

FINGER FOODS

Finger foods are good because they encourage self-feeding. Bite-size pieces and finger foods are well accepted and easy for tiny fingers to handle. To prepare finger foods, cut meat and cheese into small pieces, vegetables into strips, and fruit into sections.

WHY BREAKFAST?

Mornings in homes with young children are often hectic; parents are rushed and breakfast is often missed. Breakfast, however, is the most important meal of the day. Children need breakfast to provide them with the energy they need to play and to learn. Children who eat inadequate breakfasts often become tired, irritable, and listless as the morning progresses.

Breakfasts can be simple and quick to prepare! Sandwiches, left-over soups or casseroles, unsweetened cereals with fresh fruit, or blender milk drinks can "kick-off" a great day. Some breakfasts can be partially or fully prepared the night before. Such do-ahead meals can be a real boost to those extra-busy mornings!

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