



Food for Thought

Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers

Meat and Beans

All foods made from meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts and seeds are a part of this group. All of the foods in this group are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals.

Protein is the building material for every cell in the body. It is needed to build muscles, skin, hair and blood.

Serving size

Many people in this country eat more food from this group than they actually need. Children 2 to 3 years of age need about 2 ounces a day. Children 4 to 8 years of age need 3 to 4 ounces a day. Adults need 5 to 6 ounces a day.

What is an ounce? Three ounces of cooked meat, poultry, or fish is about the size of a deck of playing cards. One small hamburger is 2 to 3 ounces. One egg, 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter or ¼ cup of cooked beans is

equal to 1 ounce of cooked meat.

Food Tips

Foods from this group provide some very important nutrients, but can also be high in fat. It is important not to eat more than needed and to make good choices to maintain a diet low in fat.

- Choose lean meat, poultry without skins, fish, dry beans and peas often. They are the choices lowest in fat.
- Prepare meats in lowfat ways:
 - Trim away all the fat you can see.
 - Broil, roast or boil these foods instead of frying them.
- Nuts and seeds are high in fat, so eat them in moderation.

Growing Up Fit

Most children do not get enough exercise. Today there is too much watching and not enough “doing” in physical activities. Children need to be physically active on a regular basis.

Some ideas to get you started on more activity:

Jumping animals—play music and ask the children to jump like a variety of animals, such as a frog or kangaroo.

Jack Be Nimble jumps—ask each child to jump over “candlesticks” (cans could be used) without knocking them down. As each child jumps, sing the rhyme and insert his or her name.



Tips to be Tops

Help your family make food choices for a healthy diet by following these tips:

Fuel up on fruit—eat a fruit for a snack or with a meal. Try orange smiles (slices) or a fruit kabob (cubes of fruit on a toothpick) or 100% fruit juice.

Vary your vegetables—bite on beans and broccoli; crunch on carrots, corn, and cauliflower.

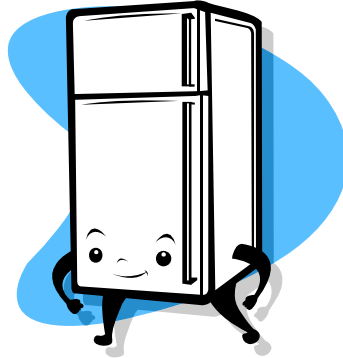
Snack smart—try a mild smoothie-blend lowfat milk or plain yogurt with mashed fruit or fruit juice—that's smart yet satisfying!

Get plenty of grains—eat spaghetti, rice, cereal, bagels, bread, or other grains for power.

Blast off with breakfast—it doesn't have to be boring—feast on leftovers, peanut butter and bananas on toast—use your imagination.

Find the fat—check out the food label to help you pick foods lower in fat.

Try new tastes—try a new vegetable; taste kiwi fruit, yogurt, pita bread, dried fruit other than raisins, whole wheat pasta, turkey sausage.



Activity:

Work together as a family and select a tip from above to try for a week. Write the tip on a piece of paper and put on the refrigerator doors as a reminder. Next week add a second tip and continue adding tips and make them habits.

Fruit Nutter Butter

1 cup crunchy peanut butter
2 Tablespoons sugar
1 cup peeled, diced oranges or apples

Blend peanut butter and sugar. Add oranges or apples and mix. Spread on bread or English muffins.

Green Eggs and Ham

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
1 Tablespoon chopped green onions (optional)
1 Tablespoons chopped green peppers (optional)
¼ cup chopped ham
4 eggs
1 Tablespoon lowfat milk
¼ cup chopped spinach
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a skillet. Add green onions, green peppers and ham, sauté. Beat eggs and milk together and add to the vegetables mixture. Stir in spinach. Add salt and pepper to taste. Stir the mixture constantly until eggs are set. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving:
120 calories, 9 g fat,
215 mg cholesterol, 200 mg sodium,
1 g carbohydrate.

This is a good snack or meal when reading Dr. Seuss's book *Green Eggs and Ham*

Prepared by:
Barbara Farner, Extension Educator
Nutrition & Wellness
Matteson Center



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION
FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM

