



HEALTHY DIET FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Information from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/nutrition-for-kids/art-20049335> and <https://www.aapublications.org/news/2016/08/23/Sugar082316>

General Rules of Thumb



- Eat at regular intervals, ideally every three hours, to avoid low blood sugar levels which can cause irritability and changes in mood and behavior.
- Include a source of protein with each meal or snack to help sustain blood glucose level in between meals/snacks.
- Avoid depriving children, unless an allergy or medical need dictates.
- Follow the 80/20 rule. 80 percent of diet should be healthy/ "strong" foods: a balance of proteins, fruits, veggies, dairy, grains. 20 percent "sometimes" foods allows room for treats, flexibility, and ability for child to make their own food choices.

Sugar Intake



- Children over age 2 years should consume no more than 6 teaspoons (25 grams) of added sugar each day.
- Children under 2 years should avoid consuming any added sugar since they need nutrient-rich diets and are developing taste preferences.
- Limit added sugars. Naturally occurring sugars, such as those in fruit and milk, are not considered added sugars.
- Majority of beverages should consist of water (this can include naturally flavored seltzer and other waters) and/or milk. Sugar sweetened beverages are treats that should be limited as much as possible.

Things to Limit



- **Dyes!** Avoid dyes as much as possible. Seek alternatives to common foods that include dyes. Several studies have found a small but significant association between artificial food dyes and hyperactivity in children.
- Limit processed foods. Try to include whole natural foods as much as possible.
- Processed foods are in the category of 20% "sometimes" foods, a fun addition but should not be the mainstay of your child's diet.

Things to Include



- Protein: Choose seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, soy products, and nuts and seeds.
- Fruits: Encourage your child to eat as much whole, fresh fruit as possible.
 - For canned fruit, look for labels that say it's light or packed in its own juice, meaning it's low in added sugar.
- Vegetables: Serve a variety of fresh, canned, frozen or dried vegetables. Aim to provide a variety of vegetables, including dark green, red and orange, beans and peas, starchy and others, each week.
- Grains: Choose whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, or brown or wild rice. Limit refined grains such as white bread, pasta and rice.
- Dairy: Encourage your child to eat and drink dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, cheese or fortified soy beverages.