



Food

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Parents can help children to be strong and happy through patient, consistent effort to build good food habits. Before they reach school age, children should learn:

- *To Feed Themselves*
- *To Enjoy Eating*
- *To Like a Variety of Foods*
- *To Eat Enough of the Right Foods*

Statements in this leaflet have been accepted by the Council on Foods and Nutrition of the American Medical Association.



24 Healthful Hours

EXERCISE — Young children need:

Long hours of play outdoors.

Vigorous play which exercises the large muscles.

Sunshine every day this is possible.

A balance between active and quiet play to safeguard against fatigue.

Activities which are not too exciting, especially at the end of the day.

Children who spend much of the day in the fresh air and sunshine are usually sturdy and tanned. They are hungry at mealtime, ready for bed, and sleep soundly through the night.

REST — Young children need:

An early bedtime.

Twelve to fourteen hours of sleep in each twenty-four hours.

A midday rest, if they are under six years of age.

A period of rest or quiet before meals.

A quiet, well-aired room in which to sleep.

Parents who see that they get enough rest. A child seldom admits he is tired.

Children who get plenty of sleep at night and periods of rest during the day are usually ready to eat, to play, to learn.

Daily Food Guide



MILK

3 to 4 glasses daily

To drink or combined with other foods



VEGETABLES

2 or more servings daily besides potato

1 raw; green and yellow often



FRUIT

2 or more servings daily

1 citrus fruit or tomato



EGGS

3 to 5 a week; 1 daily preferred



MEAT, CHEESE, OR FISH

1 or more servings daily



CEREAL AND BREAD

2 or more servings daily

Whole grain or enriched



BUTTER

On bread and with other foods daily

VITAMIN D

A rich source daily such as fish liver oils or vitamin D milk

OTHER FOODS

To satisfy appetite and complete growth and activity needs. These may be additional servings of any of the above foods or simple desserts.

"Servings" vary in size with the age of the child.

Meal Patterns

The foods needed every day should be included in simple meals served at regular hours. All meals should be about the same size. Highly-spiced foods, very sweet foods, stimulating beverages such as tea and coffee, and large amounts of fats should not be given to young children.

The following meal patterns show one way in which the necessary foods may be included each day:

BREAKFAST

Fruit, usually orange, grapefruit, or tomato juice

Cereal, whole-grain, or egg, or both

Toast and butter

Milk on cereal and to drink

DINNER

Meat, fish, egg, or cheese dish

Potato

Vegetable, raw

Bread and butter

Simple dessert, using milk, fruit, or eggs

Milk to drink

LUNCH OR SUPPER

Main dish such as cream soup, cereal with milk, or egg

Vegetable, cooked, green or yellow often

Bread and butter

Fruit, cooked

Milk to drink

If a midmorning or midafternoon lunch is needed and it does not interfere with the appetite, milk or fruit may be served.

GOOD FOOD HABITS

Help your child come to the table hungry.

Keep him from “piecing”.

If he is seldom hungry, have him examined by a doctor who understands children.

Make your child comfortable.

Select a chair high enough for his arm to rest on the table. He should be able to rest both feet either on the floor or on a broad support.

Use dishes and eating utensils he can manage. A salad fork is a good size for most pre-school children. Use cups with handles large enough for him to hold and glasses that won't tip over easily.

Prepare foods so that he can feed himself.

Cut cooked vegetables, fruits, and meat into “bite-size” pieces.

Put chopped raw vegetable mixtures into sandwiches or let children eat pieces of lettuce or carrot sticks in their fingers. These are easier for children to eat than salads.

Serve food attractively.

Use variety in color, form, and texture of foods. Have some crisp or chewy food and some food with color in it at each meal.

Keep mealtimes peaceful and happy.

Have a quiet calm atmosphere. Children playing in the room or mother doing an interesting job nearby, may take your child's attention away from his food.

Talk quietly about pleasant things. Do not use this time for scolding or punishing.

Help children learn that eating and talking each has a place in the meal.



Set a good example.

Be cheerful at mealtimes.

Eat with enjoyment. Do not discuss food dislikes.

Be a good sport. Try new foods and learn to like them as you expect children to do.

Give your child a chance to learn.

Let him try to feed himself even though he spills his food at first. He needs practice.

Help him learn to chew by gradually but regularly adding to his meals foods that require chewing.

Continue to add new foods to his meals so he can learn to like a variety of foods. A bite or two may be all he will eat the first time.

Take no short cuts.

Put attractive food in moderate quantities before your child and say no more about it.

Do not offer rewards (even just a story). It teaches him to expect a reward for eating. It does not teach him to eat.

Do not coax him to eat. If you do, he learns that he can get special attention by not eating.

Help him *learn* the right way. Gradually forming good habits is the best way to build for the future.

