

Step 4: Healthy Diet

Ages 4-8

This information is for parents who want to learn more about a healthy diet. Sometimes it is fun and informative to really monitor what your child is eating, but it is hard to do this strictly every day! Mealtime should be relaxed and socially interactive, not a rigid plan of exact ingredients! You can reach these targets for a healthy diet simply by following these every-day guidelines:

1. Read food labels and make healthy, lower fat choices.
2. Watch portion sizes—measure portions until you can estimate the size that equals a serving.
3. Drink only 1 or less sweet drink (juice included, and never any sugar-added drinks) a day (4-8 oz max!) Give fat-free milk or water instead.
4. Take 1 trip (or fewer) to a Fast Food restaurant each week.
5. Exercise 30-60 minutes every day. These can be fun things like shooting baskets or walking your dog.
6. Watch no more than 1 hr of TV per day—two hours of “screen time.”

Here are your “targets” for children ages 4-8.

First decide how active your child is compared to other children his/her age.

Next find your targets for calories and fat intake per day

	Not very active calories	Fat grams	Moderately Active calories	Fat grams	Active calories	Fat grams
Girls	1200-1400	33-39	1400-1600	39-44	1400-1800	39-50
Boys	1200-1400	33-39	1400-1600	39-44	1600-2000	44-56

Now look at the suggestions below to get an idea of how many servings (watch those portion sizes!) would make up a meal plan for your child. Your child should follow these guidelines:

	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	Benefits of Group
Grains	4-5 per day	5-6 per day	6 per day	6 per day	6-8 per day	Good source of energy and fiber
Vegetables	3-4 per day	3-4 per day	3-4 per day	4-5 per day	4-5 per day	Rich in potassium, magnesium and fiber
Fruits	3-4 per day	4 per day	4 per day	4-5 per day	4-5 per day	Provides essential potassium, magnesium and fiber
Fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products	2-3 per day	2-3 per day	2-3 per day	2-3 per day	2-3 per day	Major source of calcium and protein
Lean meats, poultry and fish	3 or fewer per day	4 or fewer per day	4 or fewer per day	6 or fewer per day	6 or fewer per day	Important source of protein and magnesium
Nuts, seeds and beans	3 per week	3 per week	3-4 per week	4 per week	4-5 per week	Rich in energy, magnesium, protein and fiber
Fats and oils	1 per day	1 per day	2 per day	2-3 per day	2-3 per day	

Serving Sizes and Examples:

Grains

1 slice bread, ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal. For cereals, serving sizes may vary. Be sure to check the nutrition label. Select foods that are labeled “whole grain” when possible.

Vegetables

1 cup raw lettuce or spinach, ½ cup raw or cooked vegetable (like broccoli, carrots, green beans, tomatoes, sweet potatoes), or ½ vegetable juice.

Fruits

1 apple, orange or other fruit (baseball sized or ½ cup), ¼ cup dried fruit, or ½ cup juice

Milk Products

1 cup milk or yogurt or 1 ½ oz cheese

Meats

1 oz cooked meats, chicken or fish. 1 egg or 2 egg whites. Limit egg yolks to 4 or less per week. Opt for lean cuts, and trim away any visible fat or skin. Select baked, boiled or poached recipes.

Nuts, Seeds and Beans

1/3 cup or 1 ½ oz nuts, 2 Tbsp peanut butter or seeds, ½ cup cooked beans or peas.

Fats and Oils

1 tsp margarine or vegetable oil. 1 Tbsp mayonnaise or 2 Tbsp salad dressing. Choose low-fat varieties when you can. Limit fats such as pan drippings, butter, bacon grease and other fats that come from animals.

Sweets and added sugars

Use sparingly, generally less than 3 times per week. 1Tbsp sugar, jelly or jam. ½ cup sorbet or gelatin or 1 cup lemonade.