# A Guide to Your Food Groups

This is a guide for the daily amounts your child should eat from each food group. Use the examples below to help your child meet their daily needs.

- Aim for the daily needs by spreading amounts between meals and snacks.
- Try to include a food from each group in every meal.

## Grains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What counts as an ounce of grains?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 slice of bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ½ cup of cooked pasta, rice or cereal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 – 6 inch tortilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ½ an English muffin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for _____ ounces each day

**Portioning it out**

An adult’s fist is about 1 cup. Use your child’s hand to measure an age appropriate amount of grains for a single meal or snack.

## Fruits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What counts as a cup of fruit?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup raw or cooked fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ½ cup dried fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 100% fruit juice (amount depends on child’s age)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for _____ cups each day

**Portioning it out**

A tennis ball is about ½ a cup of fruit. Age specific guidelines:

- 4 ounces per day for 2-3 year olds
- 4-6 ounces per day for 4-8 year olds
- 8-12 ounces per day for 8-18 year olds

## Vegetables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What counts as a cup of vegetables?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 cups leafy salad greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup 100% vegetable juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for _____ cups each day

**Portioning it out**

A tennis ball is about ½ a cup of vegetables. Use this as a guide to include vegetables in meals and snacks throughout the day.

## Dairy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What counts as a cup of dairy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup of milk or fortified soymilk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 cup low-fat or fat-free yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1.5 ounces of natural reduced-fat cheese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for _____ cups each day

**Portioning it out**

An adult’s thumb is about 1 ounce of cheese. Use your child’s thumb to measure an age-appropriate amount of cheese for a single meal or snack.

## Protein

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What counts as an ounce of protein foods?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry or seafood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 tablespoon of peanut butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ½ ounce of nuts or seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¼ cup cooked beans or peas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for _____ ounces each day

**Portioning it out**

An adult’s palm is about 3 ounces of meat. Use your child’s palm to measure an age-appropriate amount of meat for a single meal or snack.

## Oils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What counts as a teaspoon of oil?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 1 tsp. of vegetable oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 tsp. of margarine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 Tbsp. of salad dressing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aim for _____ teaspoons each day

**Portioning it out**

An adult’s thumb tip is about 1 tsp. of oil. Use your child’s thumb tip to measure an age-appropriate amount of oil for a single meal or snack.
### Tips

**Grains**

**Tips**
- Make half your grains whole grains.
- Choose whole grains that are good sources of dietary fiber.
- Eat fewer refined grains.

**Put the tips into action**
- Check the labels – the first ingredient should be a grain with “whole” in its name.
- Eat whole grains with at least 10-19% of the Daily Value per serving.
- Limit refined grains like cookies, cakes, pastries and donuts.

**Fruits**

**Tips**
- Vary your fruits throughout the day.

**Put the tips into action**
- Select fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruit more often than juice.
- Choose fruits canned with 100% juice or unsweetened options.
- Choose 100% fruit juice when choosing juice.
- Use fruit as snacks, salads, or desserts.

**Vegetables**

**Tips**
- Choose different colored vegetables for your meals and snacks.

**Put the tips into action**
- Fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables all count.
- Choose low or reduced sodium or no salt added canned options.
- Add dark-green, red, and orange vegetables to main and side dishes.

**Dairy**

**Tips**
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy options.

**Put the tips into action**
- Switch to fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk – these have less calories but the same amount of Calcium and other nutrients.
- Choose milk or yogurt more often than cheese.
- Select low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses.

**Protein**

**Tips**
- Aim for a variety of lean protein foods.

**Put the tips into action**
- Vary sources – have seafood, meat, poultry, and plant sources.
- Choose extra lean (at least 90% lean) ground beef.
- Try seafood (fish and shellfish) at least twice a week.
- Remove the fat – trim and/or drain fat or remove the skin.

**Oils**

**Tips**
- Choose and use healthy oils in small amounts.

**Put the tips into action**
- Use vegetable oils (like olive, corn, canola).
- Limit solid fats and try to replace them with oils.
- Choose options with zero trans fats.