

Kid's Diets

Understanding how foods are classified can greatly increase your chances for healthy balance in your child's diet.



By Dan Young

To ensure good nutrition in your child and that they grow up healthy, they will need to eat a large variety of foods. After all, your child is growing rapidly; his or her cells are replicating and dividing at an enormous rate. These cells require nutrients from a wide variety of sources.

The amount of food that they eat is much less important, although, with less activity, less is better.

Remember that your child's appetite may decrease and become pickier over the next few years as his growth rate slows. As long as they are gaining weight

and have a normal activity level, you have little to worry about. You can still offer them a variety of foods, but can decrease the serving sizes if they don't eat a lot.



THE RATIOS

Understanding how foods are classified can greatly increase your chances for healthy balance in your child's diet. The Glycemic Index of foods can be lowered simply by combining carbs, proteins and fats properly and as your child grows, very specific nutrients are needed for optimal development. So take the time to understand food classifications.

Generally, active children should be consuming 50% carbs, 25% protein and 25% healthy fat respectively of their total calorie intake.

According to the food guide pyramid, a child should be offered a variety of

foods from the following groups.

Grain – 6 servings a day. Servings include 1 slice of whole grain bread, 1/2 cup of cooked brown rice or whole wheat pasta, 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, and 1 ounce of ready to eat cereal.

Vegetable – 3 servings a day. Servings include 1/2 cup of chopped or raw vegetables, or 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables. Try to include a raw veggie or fruit at every meal. This adds needed enzymes for digestion.

Fruit – 2 servings a day. Servings include 1 piece of fruit or melon wedge, 3/4 cup of 100% fruit juice with pulp, 1/2 cup of canned fruit, or 1/4 cup of dried fruit. I make smoothies everyday with frozen organic fruits, nuts and Bio Whey Protein. My kids love'm, in fact, my five year old is now making them from scratch – herself!

Dairy – 2 servings a day. Servings include 1 cup of milk or yogurt or 2 ounces of cheese.

Protein – 2 servings a day. Servings include 2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish, 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans. You can substitute 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or 1 egg for 1 ounce of meat.



Eat well and remember, you are what your food eats!

Dan Young is President and CEO of Performance Food Centers, Corp. He is certified in personal training, sports nutrition and is a triathlete. He has competed in Body Building as well as Endurance Sports Activities. Accomplished in juice bar concept and design, he applies this knowledge to whole-foods nutrition and the efficiency to serving them.