

Food & FUN

Tips for healthy eating and active play for preschoolers and their families.

January News

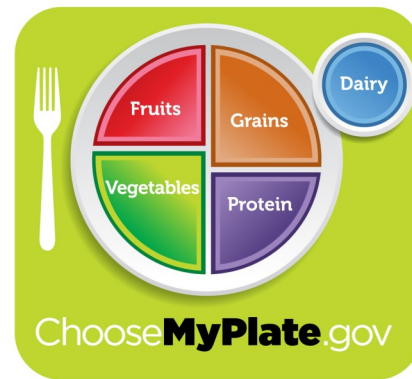
Guidelines for Healthy Eating

In January, 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These diet and physical activity guidelines are based on scientific research. Their goal is to help Americans achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, reduce risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health.

The USDA's new food icon, shown below, can help you plan healthy, balanced meals. This MyPlate image replaces the MyPyramid image. For more information, visit www.dietaryguidelines.gov and www.choosemyplate.gov.

Below are seven tips, based on the Dietary Guidelines, to help you and your family adopt healthy eating habits.

1. Enjoy your food but eat less.
2. Avoid oversized portions.
3. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
4. Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk. [Recommended for those age two and older.]
5. Make at least half your grains whole grains.
6. Compare sodium in foods and choose foods with lower numbers.
7. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



Legumes — Low Cost Nutrition Powerhouses

Legumes are a large class of plants having seed pods that split along both sides when ripe. Common legumes include beans (like kidney, pinto, lima, black, garbanzo and soybeans), split peas and lentils. Most legumes are very low in fat and rich in fiber, B vitamins and many minerals (including potassium, iron, zinc, and magnesium). They're an excellent source of plant protein and can be a healthy substitute for meat. One-quarter cup cooked beans or peas can replace one ounce meat. Dried legumes must be cooked before eating. Canned beans often have added salt, a major source of sodium. Rinse the beans with water to reduce the sodium content by about one-third. Frozen legumes are another convenient form available.

Try these ideas for using legumes: cook and eat plain or with low sodium seasoning; season and mash them for use as dips or sandwich fillings; or add them to soups, stews, salads, sauces, cooked grains, and casseroles.

For more information, visit U.S. Dry Bean Council, at www.usdrybeans.com



Fun in the Snow



Think safety first. Bundle up! Dress in layers and wear hats, mittens and boots. Apply sunscreen on the face if sunny outside. Set a reasonable time limit for outdoor play.

Follow the foot prints. Take turns leading the way, Take big steps or little steps, in straight lines, zig-zag, other patterns, or letters.

Ready, set, go. Each person gets a large spoon and a large cup. On "go", see how fast you can scoop up snow to fill the cup.

Snow ball toss. See how high and how far you can throw a snowball. Can you toss the snowball to hit or land in a target?

Build a snow man. Stand back and try to toss a hat on top.

Build something else. Use sand molds, plastic containers of different sizes and other objects.

Make a snow angel. Lie on your back in the snow with legs together and arms down at your sides. Open and close your legs. Move your arms above your head and back down. Stand up. Take a big step forward. Turn around and admire your snow angel.

No snow? Dance like whirling, twirling snowflakes. Make "snowballs" out of crumpled paper. Pretend to build a snowman.

Kitchen Activities for Preschoolers

Preschoolers like to be helpers. Below are some small jobs that preschoolers can learn to do. Don't expect perfection, but do praise their efforts. The bonus: children are more likely to eat foods they help make.

- Name and count foods
- Help measure dry ingredients
- Stir pancake and muffin batter
- Peel some fruits, like tangerines and bananas
- Squeeze citrus fruits
- Mash cooked potatoes and beans
- Help make cold sandwiches, including roll-ups



Recipe of the Month

Vary the ingredients if you want! Make it Italian style – use white beans, garbanzo beans, and green beans instead of kidney beans, pinto beans, and corn; use Italian herb blend instead of chili powder, onion powder, and cumin. For faster prep, skip the meat and add more beans.

Quick Chili

6 cups

Ingredients:

½ pound extra lean ground beef (or ground turkey breast)

15½ oz. can kidney beans, rinsed and drained

15½ oz. can pinto or black beans, rinsed and drained

15.25 oz. can whole corn, no salt added, drained (or 1-3/4 cups frozen corn)

2 cups canned tomato puree, no salt added

½ cup water, or more for thinner chili

1 tablespoon chili powder

1 tablespoon onion powder

1 teaspoon ground cumin

Optional: ½ tablespoon cocoa powder, 2 teaspoons dried cilantro (or 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro), fresh squeezed lime juice, chopped mild or hot chili peppers, plain nonfat yogurt (add after serving)

Directions:

1. Brown the meat in a large saucepan or Dutch oven. Drain any fat.
2. Add remaining ingredients (including optional ones, except yogurt). Heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Per cup: 250 calories, 3.5 g fat (1 g saturated fat), 6 g fiber, 340 mg sodium



Young Chefs

Another way to make these is to mash the beans with the other ingredients before spooning onto the tortilla. Try these cold or warm.

Tortilla-Bean Roll-Up

Yield: 1 to 2 servings

6 or 8-inch soft flour tortilla, preferably whole grain

2 to 3 tablespoons cooked or rinsed, canned beans

2 to 3 tablespoons shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese

2 to 3 tablespoons chopped fresh tomatoes or salsa

Place tortilla on a microwave-safe plate. Sprinkle beans in a row across the center of the tortilla. Sprinkle cheese over beans. Spoon salsa or tomatoes over the cheese. Fold lower half of tortilla up and over the bean filling. Roll up, starting at the fold. Cover roll-up with a sheet of waxed paper and microwave on high for 15 to 20 seconds or until slightly warmed. Allow roll-up to cool slightly. Cut roll-up in half or thirds for easier handling.