

**Preparing  
for a  
Lifetime**  
It's Everyone's Responsibility

# GRANDPARENT

TOOLKIT



# Nutrition

## Toddler and Young Children (1-5 Years Old)

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# Start *simple* with **MyPlate**

Healthy eating is important at every life stage,  
with benefits that add up over time, bite by bite. Small changes matter.

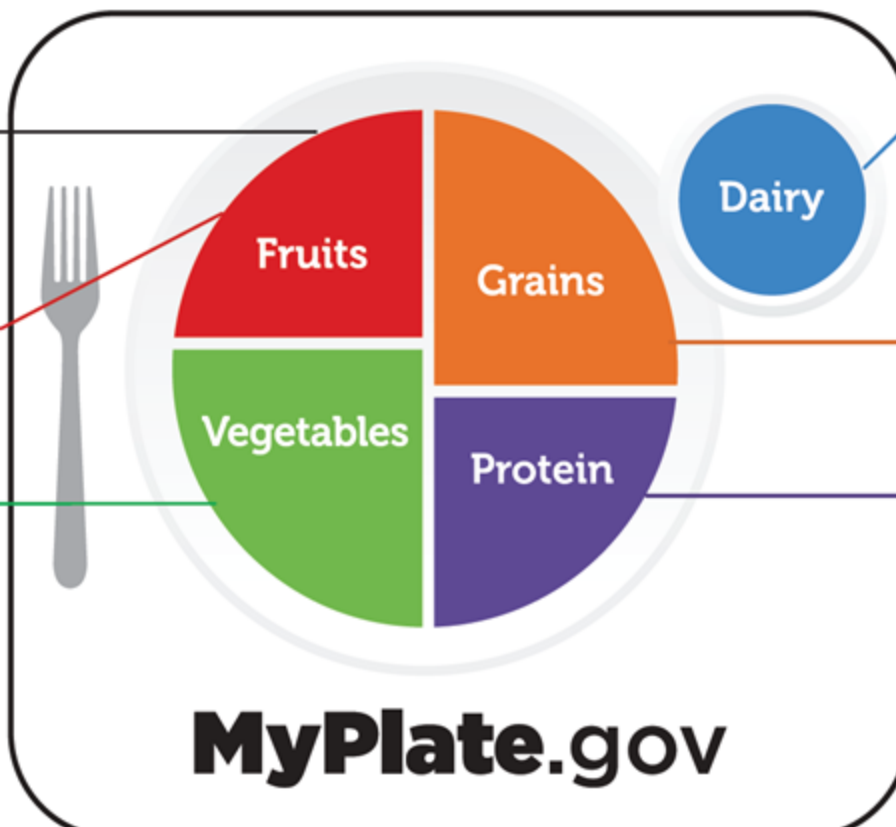
Make half your  
plate fruits and  
vegetables.

Focus on  
whole fruits.

Vary your  
veggies.

Choose foods and  
beverages with  
less added sugars,  
saturated fat, and  
sodium.

**Limit**



Move to low-fat or  
fat-free dairy milk or  
yogurt (or lactose-  
free dairy or fortified  
soy versions).

Make half your grains  
whole grains.

Vary your protein  
routine.

Being active can  
help you prevent  
disease and  
manage your  
weight.

**Activity**

# JUICE?

The intake of juice should be limited to:

- **No more than 4 oz/day in toddlers 1 - 3 years of age**
- **Limit 4 to 6 oz/day for children 4 - 6 years of age**

Drinking juice and sugar sweetened beverages is linked to cavities.

Children should be offered whole fruit to get the best source of nutrition.

# HEALTHY EATING TIPS FOR YOUR GRANDCHILD

- Offer a variety of healthy foods (MyPlate food groups).
- Serve water instead of sugary drinks (soda, juice, fruit drinks).
- Model healthy eating by eating with your grandchildren.
- Offer processed foods, like fast food, salty snacks or baked goods as occasional treats rather than every day.
- When able, give your grandchild a choice:

*Do you want an apple or a banana?*

# CHALLENGES TO FEEDING YOUR TODDLER (12-24 MONTHS OLD)

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They are still at risk for choking.

Their appetite and taste preferences change constantly.

They are still discovering food by playing.

They may prefer their foods simple – not touching or without sauces.

# CHALLENGES TO FEEDING PRESCHOOLERS (2-5 YEARS OLD)

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They may need to be exposed to new foods many times before they eat it.

They are ready for structured mealtimes and food routines.

They are more exposed to processed foods outside their home.

# FOODS AND PORTION SIZES

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A nutrient-dense food is one that provides a higher value of nutrients per calorie - more nutritional value.

- The primary source of nutrients for children should be from nutrient-dense solid foods alongside water and human milk and/or whole-milk.
  - For a toddler (12-24 months), offer up to 16-24 oz whole milk daily.
  - For preschoolers (2-5 years old), change to low-fat milk.
- Offer three meals and two snacks per day.
- As much as possible, offer your toddler/preschooler the same foods as the rest of the family. Watch for spicy and high-choking risk foods.



# Healthy Eating

for preschoolers

# Daily Food Checklist



Use this Checklist as a general guide.

- This food checklist is based on average needs. Do not be concerned if your child does not eat the exact amounts suggested. Your child may need more or less than average. For example, food needs increase during growth spurts.
- Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these amounts; other days they may want more. Let your child choose how much to eat. Throughout a day, offer amounts shown below.

Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
<b>Fruits</b> Focus on whole fruits 	1 cup	1 – 1½ cups	1 – 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ small banana 4-5 large strawberries 
<b>Vegetables</b> Vary your veggies 	1 cup	1 – 1½ cups	1½ – 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn 
<b>Grains</b> Make half your grains whole grains 	3 ounces	3 – 5 ounces	4 – 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked oatmeal, rice, or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across) 
<b>Protein Foods</b> Vary your protein routine 	2 ounces	2 – 4 ounces	3 – 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils) 
<b>Dairy</b> Choose low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt 	2 cups	2 – 2½ cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ¾ ounce cheese 

Some foods are easy to choke on while eating. Children need to sit when eating. Foods like hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots need to be cut into small pieces the size of a nickel. Be alert if serving 3- to 5-year-olds foods like popcorn, nuts, seeds, or other hard foods.

There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Checklist into meals and snacks. View the "Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas" to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler's plate at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers-meal-and-snack-patterns](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers-meal-and-snack-patterns).



# SELECTIVE EATING

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- Be patient. Pressuring toddlers and kids to eat makes picky eating worse.
- Caregivers decide what and when to eat, but kids choose how much to eat.
- Eat together as a family as often as you can.
- No rewards or punishments around food.
- Involve your children in meal planning and preparation as much as possible.

# CHOKING HAZARDS FOODS (0-5 YEARS OLD)



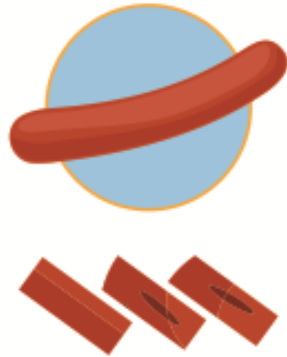
- Hot dogs
- Candy
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Apples
- Raw carrots
- Chunks of peanut butter or any nut butter
- Cherry tomatoes
- Popcorn
- Grapes
- Marshmallows
- Chewing gum
- Bones
- Sausages

# PREPARE FOOD TO REDUCE CHOKING

- Tube-shaped foods like hot dogs and string cheese should be cut into short thin strips instead of round pieces.
- Always cut round foods (grapes, cherries, berries, and tomatoes) into small pieces.
- Cook or steam hard foods like carrots. They must be soft enough to be mashed with a fork.

## Cut Tube-shaped Foods Into Smaller Pieces

Cut tube-shaped foods, such as baby carrots, string cheese, hot dogs, etc., into short strips rather than round pieces.



In addition to the foods listed, **avoid serving foods that are as wide around as a nickel**, which is about the size of a young child's throat.



## Cut Round Foods Into Smaller Pieces

Small round foods such as grapes, cherries, cherry tomatoes, and melon balls are common causes of choking.



Slice these items in half lengthwise.



Then slice into smaller pieces (**no larger than ½ inch**) when serving them to young children.



# PREPARE FOOD TO REDUCE CHOKING

- For fruits and vegetables, remove seeds, pits, and tough skins.
- For raw fruits and vegetables, chop foods into thin strips or small pieces, or grate, mash, or puree foods.
- Raw fruits and vegetables tend to be harder to chew.
- Remove all fat, skin, and bones before cooking poultry, meat, and fish.
- Grind up tough cuts of meat.

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# HEALTHY EATING ON A BUDGET

- Meat can be expensive. Get protein from beans, seeds, eggs, etc.
- Serve your young grandchild small servings and offer more if they ask to reduce waste.
- Purchase in-season fresh produce. Also include frozen or canned fruits or veggies.
- Use the food bank in your community.

If the distance to the grocery store is a challenge.



- Stock up on canned and frozen fruits and veggies.
- Choose whole wheat or whole grain products.
- When choosing pantry, shelf-stable foods, look for products with fewer listed ingredients.
- Choose water or milk instead of sugary drinks.





# SUGAR AND SWEETS

- Swap out the soda. Water is best. Delaying the introduction of sugar sweetened beverages will benefit your grandchild for his or her entire life.
- Eat fresh, frozen, dried or canned fruits. Choose fruit canned in water or natural juice. If you can only access fruit canned in syrup, especially heavy syrup, drain and rinse in a colander to remove excess syrup or juice.
- Enjoy sweets together on occasion. Consider letting your grandchild help in the kitchen when baking.
- Fruit gummies, candy, and processed treats should not be offered daily.

# SUGAR AND SWEETS

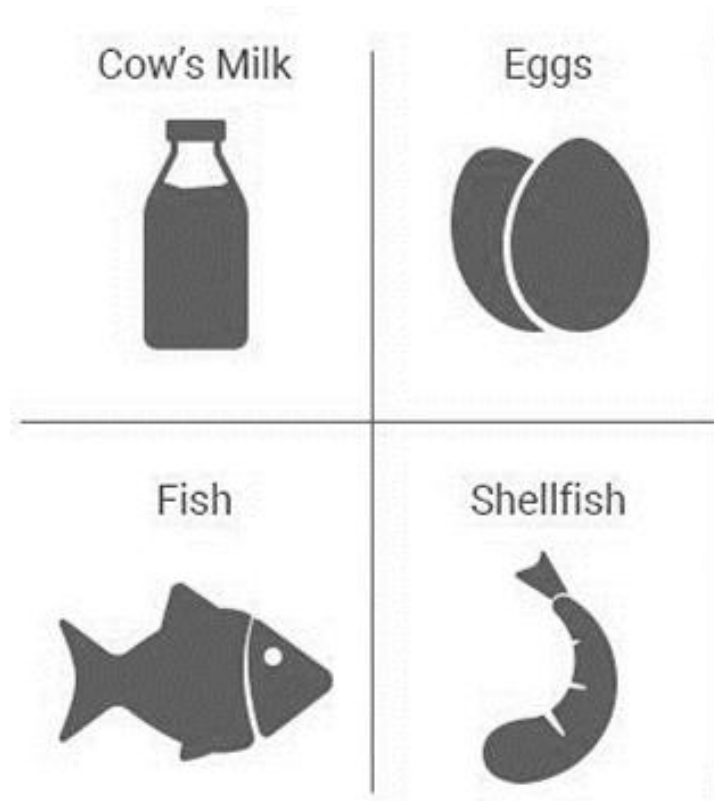
- Compare food labels and choose products with the lowest amounts of added sugars. Dairy and fruit products will contain some natural sugars.
- Add fruit. Instead of adding sugar to cereal or oatmeal, try fresh fruit (bananas, cherries or strawberries) or dried fruit (raisins, cranberries or apricots).
- Cut the serving back. When baking cookies, brownies or cakes, cut the sugar called for in your recipe by one-third to one-half.

# FOOD ALLERGIES AND INTOLERANCES

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**Food allergies** occur when the immune system reacts to a specific food.

**Food intolerances** occur when it is difficult to digest foods.

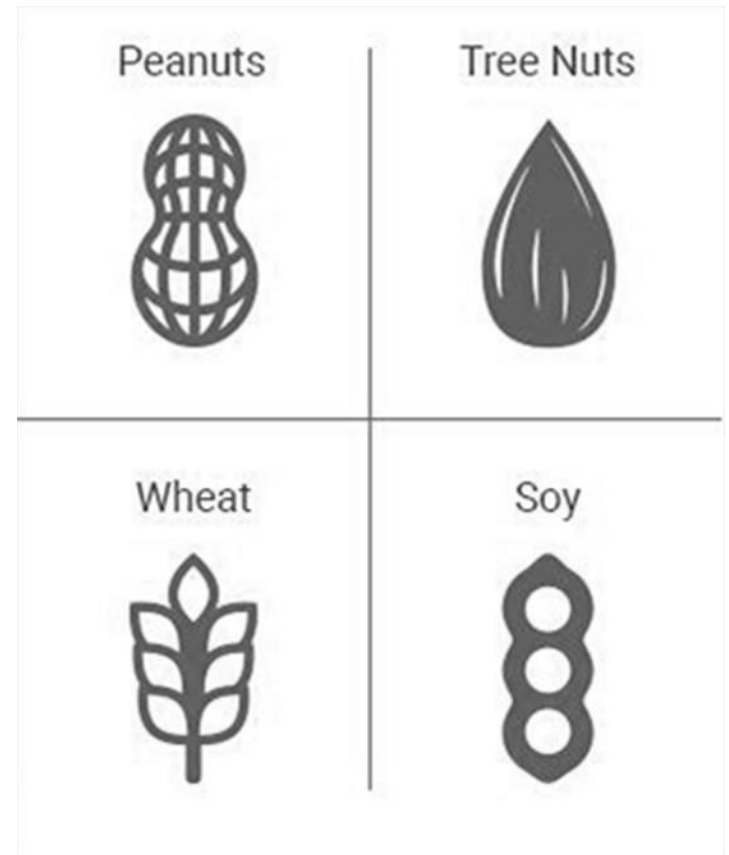


# FOOD ALLERGIES

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**Foods that are most common to trigger an allergy reaction are:**

- Cow's milk products
- Eggs
- Wheat
- Nuts and peanuts
- Soy
- Shellfish
- Fish

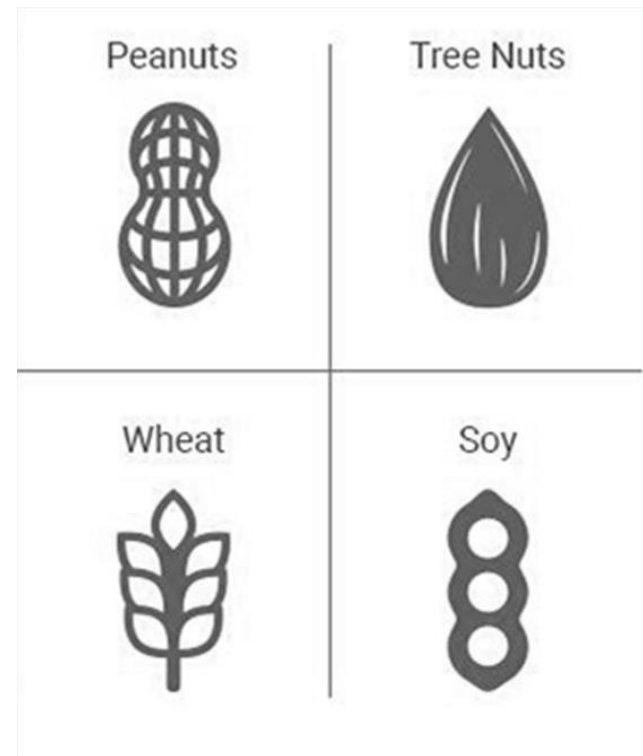


# FOOD ALLERGIES

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## Allergy Symptoms

- Eczema
- Hives, itchy skin
- Vomiting
- Swelling of lips, tongue, mouth
- Tight, itchy throat
- Difficulty breathing/wheezing
- Cramps, Diarrhea



# FOOD ALLERGIES & INTOLERANCE

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What to do if you suspect an intolerance or allergy:

- If your grandchild has a minor reaction to a food, such as vomiting, diarrhea or stomach discomfort, quit offering the food and make an appointment with the doctor.
- If your grandchild has a serious reaction involving difficulty breathing, tightness of throat or swelling of the mouth, call 911.

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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**Toddlers** should be physically active for 3 hours every day and include playing outdoors.

Movement can include:

- Moving around
- Rolling
- Skipping
- Running
- Hopping
- Jumping



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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Have fun with your grandchild while being active:

- Playing in water
- Chasing games
- Ball games
- Follow the leader games

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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**Preschoolers** should get about 3 hours of activity a day with about 1 hour of moderate to more intense physical activity.

- Jumping
- Walking
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Climbing
- Skipping
- Ball play
- Playground fun
- Riding a bike

# Nutrition

## Toddler and Young Children (1-5 Years Old)

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