

Encourage Healthy Eating Habits

April 2019

Look inside for...



- 4 Toddler Snacking Mistakes
- Healthy Eating for Preschoolers
- Making Family Meals
- MyPlate Coloring Sheet (English/Spanish)
- Featured Recipe: Apple Cinnamon Baked Oatmeal



For more information on how to lead a healthier lifestyle, visit our website GetHealthyCT.org





4 Toddler Snacking Mistakes

By Sally Kuzemchak, MS, RD

Published March 21, 2019

Toddlers are notorious nibblers. Their small bellies mean they can't eat a lot at one time, and their go-go nature means they don't want to sit at the table too long. Snacking can help add needed nourishment into a toddler's day — as long as it's done right. Here are four strategies to be smarter about snacks.

Strategy 1: Snacking on the Go

Many parents carry an arsenal of munchies to dole out when they're on the go. But too often, snacks are given to distract or occupy kids while running errands or on long drives, not because the kids actually need food. Grazing on the go also makes it hard for children to focus on their food and listen to their internal signals of hunger and fullness. Eating in the car even can be risky. If your child chokes, you may not be able to help right away. *Smarter Strategy:* Carry one or two small and easy snacks — such as a banana or small container of whole-grain crackers — in case hunger strikes while you're out. Try other distractions first (such as a book or small toy) when you need to buy time.

Strategy 2: Timing Is Everything

It's frustrating when toddlers come to the table at mealtime and don't want to eat. It's true that their appetites tend to fluctuate day to day, but snacking also may be to blame. Snacks before mealtime can make kids less receptive to trying new foods at meals. Toddlers also may learn to prefer "snack foods" — such as pretzels and gummy fruit snacks — over "meal foods," which can make things even tougher. *Smarter Strategy:* **Space meals and snacks two to three hours apart.** If your toddler's hunger doesn't seem to match up with your mealtimes, consider moving meals earlier or serving your child a portion of the meal, such as the veggies, while you finish prepping.

Strategy 3: Make Snacks Nutritious

Many snack foods that are marketed to kids are full of refined flour, added sugar and salt. Those foods are OK to eat occasionally, but they don't provide the nutrients your child needs (such as calcium, iron and fiber) and they teach kids to associate "snack" with "treat." *Smarter Strategy:* During most snack times, serve the same kinds of foods you serve at mealtime, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains including whole-wheat tortillas and bread, sources of protein such as hard-boiled eggs and hummus and dairy products such as yogurt and cheese.

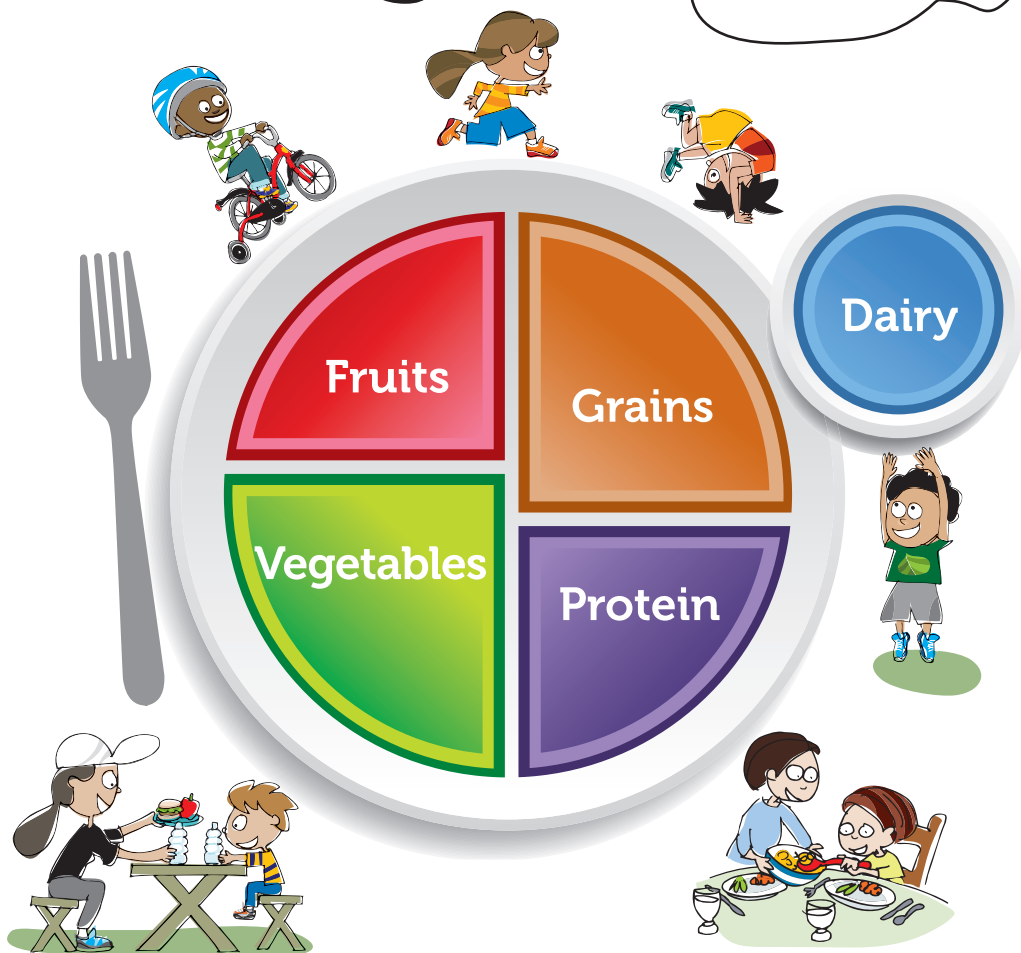
Strategy 4: Establish a Snack Schedule

Letting kids nibble all day not only ruins mealtime appetites, but also can set up unhealthy habits. Like adults, kids can learn to snack out of boredom. Mindlessly munching also can lead to a pattern of overeating. *Smarter Strategy:* Establish scheduled snack times. Most toddlers can go two hours between meals and snacks, so a mid-morning, mid-afternoon and evening snack may work well. Asking your toddler to wait may be tricky at first if munching on demand is the norm. By sticking to dependable meal and snack times, your child will feel reassured that there are plenty of opportunities to eat.



United States Department of Agriculture

Healthy Eating ^{for} preschoolers



Choose**MyPlate**.gov

Get your child on the path to healthy eating.



Offer a variety of healthy foods.

Choose foods from each MyPlate food group. Pay attention to dairy foods, whole grains, and vegetables to build healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Be mindful of sweet drinks and other foods.

Offer water instead of sugary drinks like regular soda and fruit drinks. Other foods like hot dogs, burgers, pizza, cookies, cakes, and candy are only occasional treats.

Focus on the meal and each other.

Your child learns by watching you. Let your child choose how much to eat of foods you provide. Children copy your likes, dislikes, and your interest in trying new foods.

Be patient with your child.

Children enjoy food when eating it is their own choice. Some new foods take time. Give a taste at first and wait a bit. Let children serve themselves by taking small amounts. Offer new foods many times.

Cook together.

Eat together.

Talk together.

Make meal time family time.





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:
Fruits 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
Vegetables 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
Grains 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)
Protein Foods 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)
Dairy 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.





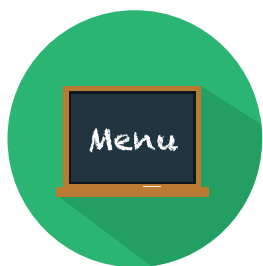
United States Department of Agriculture



MyPlate
MyWins

Making family meals

Family meals around the table provide an opportunity to spend time together.
Try these tips to help your family enjoy mealtimes together.



Plan your meals

Avoid stress at mealtime by planning a weekly menu and posting it in a location for everyone to see, like a chalkboard in the kitchen.



Prep ahead

Have ingredients for the week ready. After you shop, cut vegetables and measure ingredients in advance for easier meals.



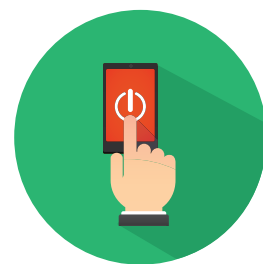
Make mealtime a priority

Make time for family meals when planning your household's schedule each week. Try to cook, eat up, and clean up together!



Think beyond dinner

If evenings are too hectic at your house, consider other meals for family time such as a weekend brunch or even afternoon snack time.



Keep meals fun and focused

Keep the family table a media- and stress-free zone. Use your valuable family time to “unplug,” interact, and focus on each other.



List more tips



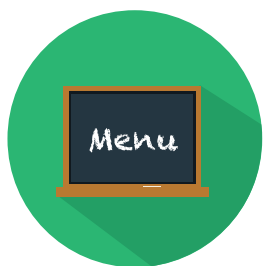
United States Department of Agriculture



MiPlato
MisVictorias

Preparación de comidas en familia

Las comidas en familia en torno a la mesa del comedor son la oportunidad perfecta para pasar tiempo juntos. Pruebe estos consejos para ayudar a su familia a disfrutar de las comidas juntos.



Planee las comidas

Para evitar el estrés a la hora de la comida, planee un menú semanal y colóquelo en un lugar visible a la vista de todos, como en una pizarra en la cocina.



Prepare con antelación

Tenga los ingredientes para la semana listos. Después de hacer la compra, corte las verduras y mida los ingredientes por adelantado para que luego sea más fácil preparar las comidas.



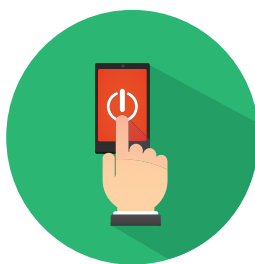
Haga de la hora de la comida una prioridad

Reserve tiempo para las comidas en familia cuando planee el horario de la semana. Intenten cocinar, comer y limpiar todos juntos!



Piense en otras opciones además de la cena

Si las noches son demasiado ajetreadas para su familia, considere otros momentos para comer en familia como un “brunch” durante el fin de semana o incluso compartir unos refrigerios por la tarde.

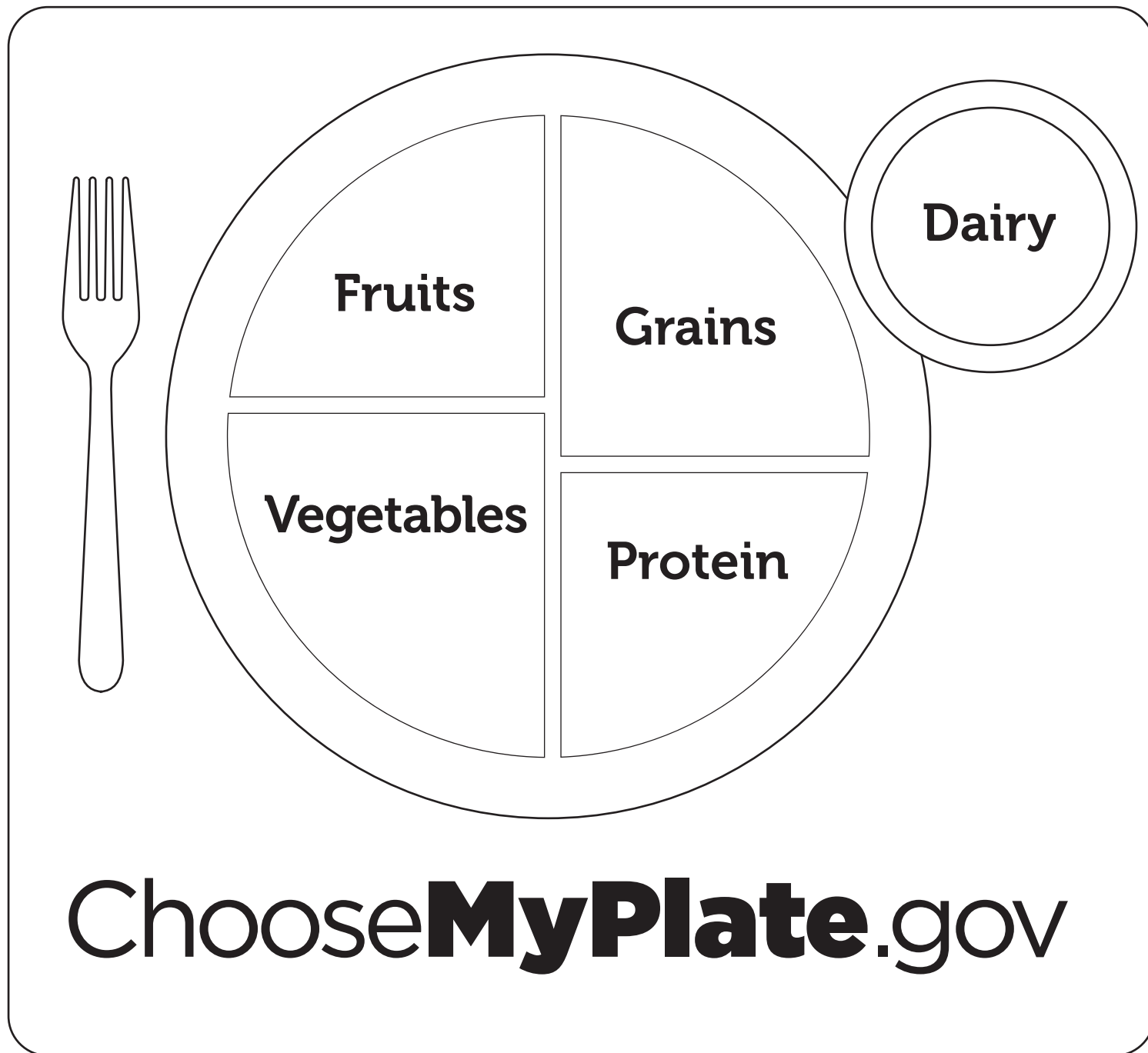


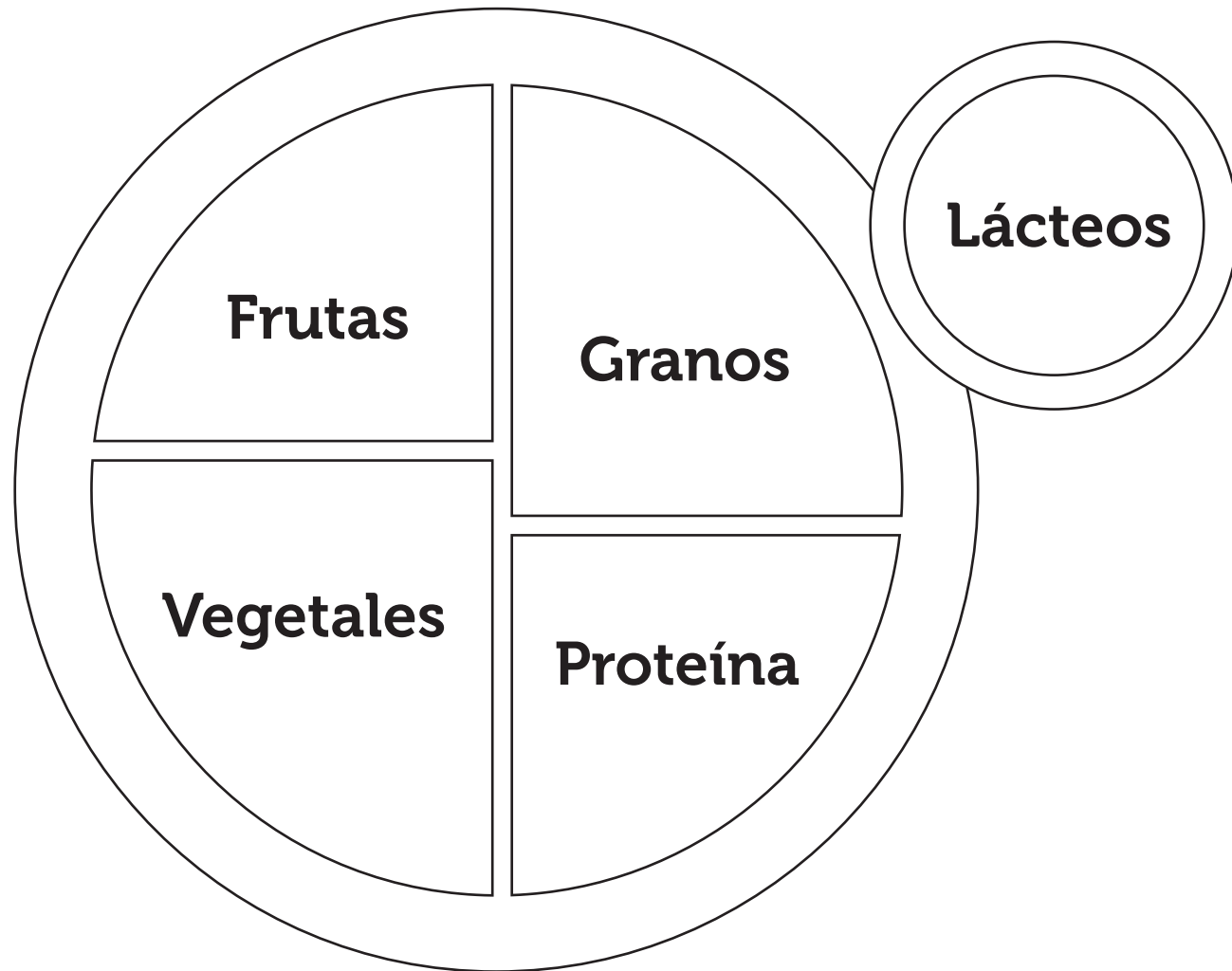
Las comidas deben ser divertidas y enfocadas

La mesa del comedor tiene que ser un lugar tranquilo y sin distracciones electrónicas. Aprovechen el tiempo en familia para “desconectar”, interactuar y prestar atención los unos a los otros.



Listar más consejos





MiPlato
Choose**MyPlate**.gov

Apple Cinnamon Baked Oatmeal Recipe

Review By Taylor Wolfram, MS, RDN, LDN

Published January 08, 2018



This make-ahead dish is handy to heat up and have for a quick healthy breakfast or snack. You can add a touch more brown sugar if you like it sweeter and a splash of milk for more creaminess.

Ingredients

1½ cups fat-free milk or soy milk
½ cup packed brown sugar
½ cup egg substitute or egg whites
1 tablespoon melted margarine
½ teaspoon cinnamon
2 cups rolled oats (not instant)
1 teaspoon baking powder
1½ cups chopped apples

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a small bowl mix the milk, brown sugar, egg substitute/whites, margarine and cinnamon.
3. In a larger bowl combine the oats and the baking powder.
4. Pour the wet mixture into the bowl with the oats; add the apples and stir to combine.
5. Spoon the mixture into a 8-by-8-inch pan coated with cooking spray and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until top is firm and a toothpick comes out clean in the center.

Nutrition Information

Serving size: 1 square

Serves 9

Calories: 160; Total fat: 3g; Saturated fat: < 1g; Sodium: 80mg; Total Carbohydrate: 30g; Dietary Fiber: 3g; Sugars: 18g; Protein 4g; Vitamin A: 248 IU; Vitamin C: 1.5 mg; Calcium: 56mg.

Source: <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep/recipes/apple-cinnamon-baked-oatmeal-recipe>