



Food For Thought

Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers

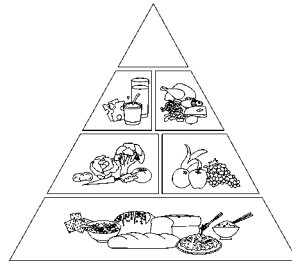
Fats, Oils and Sweets

This month we finish our discussion of the Food Guide Pyramid. We will look at the top of the pyramid, the fats, oils, and sweets. These foods supply calories, but little or no vitamins and minerals. The recommendation is to use the foods from this group sparingly.

Some food choices in the other food groups can be high in fat or added sugars also. When choosing foods for a healthful diet, consider the fat and added sugars in your choices from the food groups, as well as the fats, oils, and sweets from the top of the pyramid.

Fats

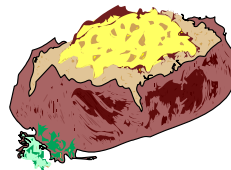
In general, foods that come from animals (milk and meat groups) are naturally higher in fat than foods that come from plants. But there are many lowfat dairy and lean meat choices available, and these foods can be prepared in ways that lower fat.



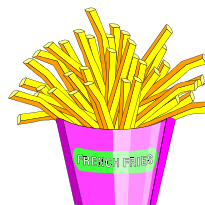
Fruits, vegetables, and grain products are naturally low in fat. But many popular items are prepared with fat, like french-fried potatoes, making them higher fat choices.

For example:

One baked potato = 120 calories and a trace of fat



Fourteen French fries = 225 calories and 11 grams of fat



Added Sugars

Added sugars provide calories with few vitamins and minerals. Most of the added sugars come from the top of the pyramid in soft drinks, candy, jams, jellies, syrups and table sugar we add to foods.

Added sugars in the food groups come from foods such as ice cream, sweetened yogurt, chocolate milk, canned or frozen fruit with heavy syrup, and sweetened bakery products like cakes and cookies. Adding sugar to fruit increases the sugar and the calories.

Too many foods from the top of pyramid will fill you up, but will not provide the vitamins and minerals that you need. Remember to eat foods from the top of the pyramid only once in awhile and in small amounts.

Make Meals Matter

No matter how simple or fancy the meal, time spent around the table may be one of the best opportunities for today's busy families to gather and talk.

- Emphasize the importance of mealtime and encourage your family to make it a priority.
- Let all family members help with some part of the meal, including setting the table and cleaning up.

- Keep meals simple and easy. Serve more elaborate meals when you have more time to cook.
- Let your children help in a variety of ways, so that they don't get bored with the same old task.
- Make positive communication a priority during mealtimes. Turn off the TV and encourage family members to talk about their day or discuss upcoming family outings or activities.
- Be flexible. On occasion, the "family table" might be the booth at a fast food restaurant or a picnic in the park.



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St. Patrick's Day

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a treat.



Shamrock Shakes

- 1 ripe banana
- 2 cups lime sherbet
- 2 cups milk

Blend all ingredients together in a blender.

Makes 4, 3/4-cup servings

Steak Fries

- 4 medium-to-large Russet potatoes (or similar)
- 1 Tbsp. canola oil (or similar)
- Canola nonstick cooking spray
- Salt (optional) as desired

Scrub the potatoes. Cut in half widthwise. Then place each potato half, cut side down, on a cutting board. Use an apple cutter or corer (pushing down from the top of the potato) or a knife to make wedge steak fries.

Preheat oven to 425° F. Pour the oil into the bottom of a 9" x 13" baking pan. Spread oil evenly. Place the potato wedges in the pan. Spray the tops of the fries generously with nonstick cooking spray. Bake the fries for about 20 minutes. Flip the fries over and sprinkle with salt or seasoning salt if desired. Bake 10 minutes more.
 Makes 6 servings

Per serving: Calories 203, Fiber 4 grams, Cholesterol 0 mgs. Sodium 14 mgs. Fat 2 grams

