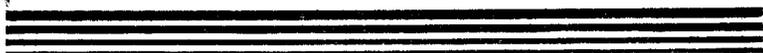


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CHILDREN'S BUREAU
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IN COOPERATION WITH
BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



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Well-Nourished Children

CHILDREN must be well nourished if they are to be healthy in every way. This does not mean that well-nourished children cannot get sick. But they usually have more resistance to many kinds of disease and a better chance to get well quickly. Children who feel well and look well are likely to be happy.

Mothers and fathers have a responsibility for the health of their children that starts before the children are born and lasts until they are fully grown. A mother should go to a doctor as soon as she thinks she is pregnant and should follow his advice. Mothers who eat the right foods and who obey other rules of health give their babies a good chance to be born healthy. These mothers are most likely to be able to give their babies the best possible food for the first months of life—plenty of good breast milk.

Parents should take their children regularly to the doctor for a physical examination, for advice on food and health habits, and for protection against such diseases as smallpox and diphtheria. The day-to-day care that children receive at home and at school is equally important and should be based on reliable information on nutrition and health.

Mothers and fathers can see to it that children form habits that will help to keep them in good health throughout life. The habits that have most to do with good nutrition are eating, sleeping, and exercising. This folder will take up food and eating habits only. (For information on other phases of child care see publications listed on p. 16.)

Foods That Children Need

The foods that children eat must provide materials for the growth of their bodies—for building muscle, sound teeth and bones, and blood. Food must supply energy also. No single kind of food will build a strong body, keep it in good running order, and allow energy for the day's activity. But most foods have more than one kind of food value and some kinds furnish important food values more cheaply than others. The most important foods for children are:

Milk and milk products.
Vegetables and fruits.
Whole-grain cereals and bread.
Eggs.
Lean meat, fish, or poultry.
Cod-liver oil.

Each food group listed gives children some of the things that their bodies must have—vitamins, minerals, other building materials, and energy. The kinds of foods listed are not the only ones that children can have. But mothers who plan their children's meals so that they eat enough of these important foods and a variety in each group can be pretty sure that their children are well fed. As long as children are growing, they need more food in proportion to their size than grown-ups need. Children need the most food *for their size* when they are growing the fastest and when they are most active; that is, when they are babies and again when they are in their teens.

Because most families have to think about how much they can spend for food, this folder pays special attention to those foods that give good value for their cost. Fortunately, many very nourishing foods are cheap also.

A Food Plan for the Whole Family

This folder deals with the food for all the children in the family except the baby under 1 year old; he should have the food ordered for him by a doctor who sees him regularly. The baby needs special foods and the following suggestions are not intended to apply to him.

After babyhood most children have the right kind of food only when the whole family is well fed. To be sure, some of the foods that grown-ups can eat are not suitable for children—highly seasoned foods and tea, coffee, and other drinks that contain the stimulant caffeine. Then too, some of the foods that are good for all ages should be prepared differently for children and for grown-ups. For example, potatoes are good food for everybody in the family, but for young children potatoes should be baked, boiled, or steamed rather than fried.

On the whole parents and children thrive on the same foods, and so meals should be planned for the whole family. The plan for meals will vary with the kinds of foods that a family can raise or buy. The foods will vary too with seasons for home-grown products, local food prices, and family food habits. The bulletin "Diets to Fit the Family Income" listed on page 16 outlines four food plans that differ in cost. Some of the choices that families may make in carrying out a low-cost food plan are outlined below for each of the main groups of food products.

Milk

How Much?

One and one-half pints to one quart a day for each child.

One pint a day for each person over 16.

One quart a day for the expectant or nursing mother.

What Kind?

Whole milk at least for the children. Choose fresh whole milk, unsweetened evaporated milk in cans, or powdered whole milk. Dilute the evaporated milk with an equal measure of water, or mix the powdered milk with water as the package directs.

Skim milk has most of the bone- and tooth-building materials of whole milk and can take the place of whole milk if plenty of foods rich in vitamin A are used, such as butter, cod-liver oil, and greens. Fresh skim milk, dry skim milk mixed with the right amount of water, and buttermilk made from skim milk are much alike in food value but are not equal to whole milk.

Whenever fresh milk is given to children, it must be clean and free from disease germs. Proper pasteurization of milk or boiling of milk will make it safe. This applies to milk from your own cow as well as to the milk that you buy. It is advisable to boil any milk that is given to children under 2, because it is so important to be sure that the milk they drink is safe and also because boiled milk is easier for many young children to digest.

For the rest of the family, properly pasteurized milk of good quality is safe to drink as it comes from the bottle. However, milk regulations vary in different States and all pasteurized milk on the market is not yet of the same sanitary quality. If you are not sure that the pasteurized milk you are using meets the standard requirements, you should boil it before any members of the family drink it.

Cheese can take the place of some milk in the day's food for grown-ups and children over 2. Cottage cheese and mild American cheese combined with other foods—as in a sandwich or a simple salad with mildly seasoned dressing—are suitable for older children and are low-cost foods. Cheese should be made from milk that is safe for drinking.

Vegetables and Fruits

How Much?

Everyone in the family should have four servings or more of vegetables and fruit a day; for example, at least a fruit at breakfast, a vegetable at noon and at night, and a fruit dessert at one meal. Vegetables and fruits are much alike in food value, but some kinds are especially valuable.

What Kind?

A fruit or vegetable rich in vitamin C every day.

Oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, greens, cabbage, turnips, and rutabagas are rich in vitamin C. Children under 4 should have oranges, grapefruit, or tomatoes or the juice of these fruits every day. Older children and grown-ups need at least one serving every day of some food rich in vitamin C.

A vegetable or fruit rich in vitamin A and in iron every day.

All green and yellow vegetables, yellow fruits, and ripe tomatoes provide large amounts of vitamin A.

Green leaves are rich in iron as well as in vitamin A. Remember how important the following vegetables are when selecting food: Beet tops and turnip tops, collards, kale, spinach, broccoli, lettuce and other salad greens, and dandelion and other edible wild greens.

Yellow vegetables and fruits to use for vitamin A are carrots, rutabagas, yellow turnips, yellow squash, sweetpotatoes, pumpkins, apricots, and yellow peaches.

A serving of potatoes or sweetpotatoes every day.

They may be used more than once a day; they give good returns in food value for their cost.

Another fruit or vegetable every day or another serving of those already listed.

Prunes and other dried fruits and bananas give good returns in food value for their cost. Apples and the root vegetables are cheap most of the year. Pears, grapes, and other fruit in season bring variety to meals.

Canned vegetables and fruits resemble cooked vegetables and fruits in food value.

Dried beans, dried peas, peanuts, and peanut butter are important foods for the family that has to get the most for its food money. They supply iron and some of the vitamins as well as building and energy-producing materials at low cost.

Eggs

How Many?

At least 4 or 5 eggs a week for young children and expectant or nursing mothers.

Three or more eggs a week for other members of the family.

When eggs are plentiful and cheap, one egg or more a day may well be used for each member of the family, including the eggs used in cooking. Eggs may take the place of meat or fish as a main dish for dinner. They are a good building food, especially rich in iron and vitamin A.

What Grade?

The food value of eggs does not depend upon the grade or the color of the shell. Eggs that have been carefully handled in cold storage or water glass may be as good for cooking as fresh market eggs.

Lean Meat or Fish

How Much?

A serving once a day for each person if possible; at least four servings a week.

What Kind?

All lean meats have much the same food value, whether the cut is tough or tender, or whether served rare or well done. They are rich in iron, some of the vitamins, and other building materials.

Liver and kidneys are richer in iron and some vitamins than lean muscle meat.

Fish and shellfish have about the same food value as meat and may be used often for the main dish. Fish and shellfish from salt water are especially good because they are rich in iodine.

Some low-cost forms of lean meat and fish are:

Home-raised meat and poultry.

Heart, kidneys, and liver (beef, lamb, or pork).

Less tender cuts of lean meat with little bone or gristle.

Canned pink salmon, canned mackerel, canned California sardines.

Salt cod and other salt fish.

Locally caught fresh fish and wild game.

Cereals and Bread

How Much?

A serving of cereal once a day; more than once a day if money is scarce or appetites are large.

In counting servings of cereals, include rice, grits, macaroni, spaghetti, and noodles, if used, as well as breakfast foods. Cereals like grits, rice, or macaroni should not be counted as vegetables.

Bread at every meal for those who need plenty of energy food, especially children in their teens.

What Kind?

All kinds of cereal products and bread supply energy.

Cereals and breads made from the whole grain are rich also in some of the vitamins and minerals that are taken out in making white or refined grain products. For example, whole wheat or rye flours and breads, brown rice, cracked wheat, and oatmeal have more vitamins and minerals than white flours and white breads, white rice, and some of the packaged breakfast foods and crackers.

When buying packaged cereals or crackers or a sack of flour, read the label. If flour, breakfast cereals, and crackers have been made from all or most of the grain, the label will say so. Look for the weight on the package of cereal or crackers and figure the cost per pound so as to buy the kind that gives the most for your money.

Families who can have just barely as many fruits and vegetables as they need (four servings a day carefully chosen for their vitamin and mineral values) should eat not less than half of their servings of bread and cereal as whole-grain products.

Large families may find it much cheaper to buy flour and bake at home than to buy bread and other bakery goods. Some farm families can save money by having their own wheat, corn, or other grain ground; others can save by buying flour, meal, and cracked wheat in bulk at a mill.

Some of the whole-grain products that give good returns in food value for the money spent are:

- Whole-wheat flour.
- Whole-rye flour.
- Whole-corn meal.
- Cracked wheat.
- Rolled oats.

Sweets

How Much?

One or two sweet foods a day if they do not take away the appetite for more important foods such as milk, vegetables and fruits, and whole-grain cereals.

What Kind?

Molasses, cane sirup, sorghum sirup, and dried fruits are sweets that contain a good deal of iron and calcium. These minerals are not found in refined sugar and corn sirup.

As a general rule children should be allowed to have sweets only at the end of the meal. Some of the best sweets for children are foods that are also valuable for other reasons. Among these are plain cookies (molasses, oatmeal, and whole-wheat), custards and simple puddings, and the dried fruits such as dates, figs, raisins, prunes, and apricots. Bread spread with fruit butter, jam, jelly, or honey is also suitable for dessert.

Fats

How Much?

About three-quarters of a pound a week per person in a family that includes both grown-ups and children.

What Kind?

Butter and cream supply vitamin A as well as energy. Most other fats supply energy only, although some brands of oleomargarine contain added vitamin A, as stated on the label.

Every meal should contain some fat to make it "stay by" and give a feeling of satisfaction. Children who have a quart of whole milk a day get a good deal of the fat that they need in the cream of the milk. Either butter, or oleomargarine that contains added vitamin A, used as a spread and in cooking, is a good choice of fat for children. If these kinds of fat are not

used and if the children are getting only skim milk, mothers must be sure that the children eat plenty of green and yellow vegetables and cod-liver oil to take care of the need for vitamin A.

Cod-Liver Oil

How Much?

It is important to give cod-liver oil regularly to young children because it contains vitamins necessary for the building of strong bones and sound teeth. Two teaspoonfuls of cod-liver oil a day is the usual amount given to children between 1 and 2 years old. Children should continue to take cod-liver oil throughout the years of rapid growth, especially during seasons when it is cold or cloudy. Because of the relation of cod-liver oil to bone and tooth development before birth and in infancy, many doctors recommend it in the diet of expectant or nursing mothers.

What Kind?

All cod-liver oil contains two important vitamins, D and A. Different brands of cod-liver oil vary in the amount of these vitamins they contain. The cod-liver oil that you buy should show on the label that it contains not less than 85 U. S. P. (United States Pharmacopeia) units of vitamin D per gram. An oil marked U. S. P. meets this standard. Some of the cod-liver oil that is sold at a very low price contains 85 U. S. P. units of vitamin D per gram, and some low-priced oil is much higher than this in vitamin-D content.

Other fish-liver oils are rich in vitamin D and in vitamin A and there are a number of preparations on the market that are rich only in vitamin D or only in vitamin A. A mother who is not familiar with vitamin units should give her children cod-liver oil unless a doctor advises one of these other vitamin-rich preparations and tells her how much to use.

Water

Water is more than a beverage; it is needed for all parts of the body and also for helping to throw off waste materials. Most children and grown-ups perspire so much in summer that they get thirsty enough to drink the water their bodies need. It is best not to wait for thirst as a reminder, especially in cool weather, but to form the habit of drinking water at definite times in the morning and afternoon. Children should be taught this habit early in life. If water is taken at the beginning of a meal, many children will not drink their milk. If milk is to be a part of the meal, water is best given after the milk has been drunk.

Forming Good Food Habits

Setting good food before children supplies the materials needed for good nutrition. It should be given them at regular hours and, of course, they must eat the food to be well nourished. Children begin to form food habits soon after they are born. Parents can see to it that these early food habits are good ones that will stand by their children for the rest of their lives.

Good appetite is a big help in forming good food habits. Children who have enough sleep and who do not come to meals overtired, who play actively—preferably in the open air—and who have good meals at regular hours under pleasant conditions are likely to have good appetites.

Eating between meals or “piecing” can become a bad habit that spoils the appetite for regular meals. But many very active, rapidly growing children may be better off if they are given tomato or fruit juice, an apple, or a glass of milk at a regular hour between meals provided it has been found that it does not spoil the appetite for the next regular meal.

Children imitate older people. Young children whose fathers, mothers, and older brothers and sisters eat what is set before them are seldom finicky about their food.

Feeding themselves may be a difficult job for very young children; it should be made as easy as possible by seeing that chairs are of the right height, cups are easy to hold, dishes do not tip over easily, and spoons and other tools can be held easily.

Children should be encouraged to feed themselves as soon as they are ready to try to do so. They will scatter and spill food at first, but they should not be made to feel that they have done wrong. They should be encouraged to go on trying.

If new foods are introduced gradually and if helpings are child sized, children should be expected to learn to eat any of the wholesome food set before them. They should not be forced to eat more than they have appetite for.

Most children will refuse food now and then, often for good reasons. If they receive a lot of attention when they will not eat, they are likely to form the habit of refusing foods because they enjoy being the center of interest. Parents should be concerned if their children steadily refuse to eat foods that are necessary for good nutrition. But they should tell their worries to the doctor and not show them to the children.

The meal hour should not be a playtime. It should be a quiet, happy time.

The most important factor in assuring good nutrition in children is the knowledge of how to select the proper kinds of food and how to encourage good food habits. Good nutrition in childhood is essential preparation for health throughout life.

Nourishing Foods for Growing Children

A DAILY CHECK LIST

MILK.—One and one-half pints to one quart a day for each child.

BUTTER (or oleomargarine that contains added vitamin A).—At every meal.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.—At least four servings a day for each child. In choosing them, consult this list:

A fruit or vegetable rich in vitamin C: Oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, green leafy vegetables, cabbage, turnips.

A vegetable or fruit rich in vitamin A and in iron: Green leafy vegetables, other green vegetables, yellow vegetables, yellow fruits, ripe tomatoes.

Potatoes: At least 1 serving a day.

Another serving of some kind of fruit or vegetable every day.

EGGS.—One a day for each child if possible; at least four or five eggs a week for each young child.

MEAT OR FISH.—Once a day, or at least four times a week.

CEREALS AND BREAD.—One serving of cereal a day for each child; bread according to appetite and energy needs, perhaps at every meal.

SWEETS.—For dessert, if appetite allows, after the other foods listed have been eaten.

COD-LIVER OIL.—Every day.

Publications on Child Care and Feeding

Single copies of most of the bulletins and folders listed below may be obtained free by writing to the Federal Bureau that publishes them. Many State and city departments of health and State agricultural colleges also supply free bulletins on foods and nutrition.

From the Children's Bureau

United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

Prenatal Care. Publication 4.

Infant Care. Publication 8.

The Child From One to Six. Publication 30.

Child Management. Publication 143.

Are You Training Your Child To Be Happy? Publication 202. (English and Spanish editions.)

Folders:

1. The Expectant Mother.
3. Why Drink Milk?
8. Breast Feeding.
9. Keeping the Well Baby Well.
10. Out of Babyhood Into Childhood.
11. Why Sleep?

From the Bureau of Home Economics

United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Food for Children. Farmers' Bulletin 1674.

Good Food Habits for Children. Leaflet 42.

Diets to Fit the Family Income. Farmers' Bulletin 1757.

Milk for the Family. Farmers' Bulletin 1705.

Dry Skim Milk. (Directions and recipes.)

Getting the Most for Your Food Money.