

MACRONUTRIENTS:

Carbohydrates provide the body with glucose, which is made into energy and used by the most systems in the body and also supports physical activity.

Foods containing healthy sources of carbohydrates include:

- Whole grains
- Fruits
- Starchy vegetables (potatoes, peas, corn)
- Beans
- Lentils (a type of legume)
- Dairy products (mainly milk and yogurt)

Foods containing unhealthy sources of carbohydrates include:

- Pastries (cake and cookies)
- Candy
- Soda

Protein is important for growth and development in children. Every cell in the human body contains protein, and it is needed in order to repair and build cells.

Foods containing healthy sources of protein include:

- Meat
- Chicken
- Fish
- Dairy (mainly milk and yogurt)
- Soy/tofu
- Beans
- Nuts
- Lentils

Fat provides energy and helps the body to absorb certain nutrients. Children need fat in their diets but not too much.

Try and limit:

- Saturated fats, including solid shortening (Crisco®), lard and butter
- Trans fats found in many processed foods (e.g. donuts, cookies and chips)

Try and replace these fats with better fats, including:

- Oils such as olive, canola, sesame
- Oil-based salad dressing such as vinaigrette
- Avocados
- Nuts including nut butters (e.g., peanut or almond butter)
- Seeds such as sunflower or pumpkin seeds

Based on calories, here's how much the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that children eat each day from each food group for a healthy, balanced diet:

Age	Fruit (cups)	Vegetables (cups)	Grains (ounces)	Meats & Beans (ounces)	Milk (cups)	Oils (tsp)
2-3	1	2	3	2	2	3
4-8	1-1½	1½	4-5	3-4	2	4
9-3 (females)	1½	2	5	5	3	5
9-13 (males)	1½	2½	6	5	3	5
14-18 (females)	1½	2½	6	5	3	5
14-18 (females)	2	3	7	6	3	6

US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Estimated General Calorie Needs for Children and Adolescents:

Age	Calorie Needs
2-3	1,000
4-8	1,200-1,400
9-3 (females)	1,600
9-13 (males)	1,800
14-18 (females)	1,800
14-18 (females)	2,200

Why Are School Lunches So Important?

- Children are still growing, developing bones, teeth, muscles and blood, so they need nutritious foods to support this growth.
- School lunches provide approximately 1/3 of the daily recommended intake (DRI) of the nutrients that children need as established by the Institute of Medicine.
- Some studies show that children may do better in school when they participate in the school breakfast program vs. not eating breakfast.
- Good nutrition starts early. Studies show that if kids eat healthy foods at a younger age, they may be more likely to eat healthier as adults.