



What Foods Can Do For You

Everyone is talking about the importance of healthy eating! But why is it so important to eat right? We've all heard of the Five Food Groups (Dairy, Fruit, Vegetables, Grains, and Meat and Beans), and you may know that eating foods from each of the food groups every day helps build a healthy and balanced diet. However, what you may not know is that many students your age are not eating enough foods from some of the food groups that contain important nutrients needed for

their growing bodies. These nutrients are **calcium, potassium, magnesium, fiber** and **vitamin E**. Food groups that contain these important nutrients are called the **Food Groups to Encourage: low-fat and fat-free dairy foods (milk, cheese and yogurt), fruits, vegetables, and whole grains** – below are some examples.

For more information on foods that are good for you, visit www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/.

Food Group	Nutrient & What It Does	Types of Food	How Much Do I Need*
(Low-fat or Fat-free) Dairy	<p>Calcium helps build strong bones and teeth, plays an important role in nerve function, muscle activity and blood clotting</p> <p>Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure and helps regulate your body's fluid balance</p> <p>Protein helps build muscle and repair body tissue</p> <p>vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium for its use in building strong bones</p>	Low-fat and fat-free milk (white and flavored), cheese (Cheddar, American, mozzarella) or yogurt (plain, flavored, added fruit)	<p>3 servings of Low-fat or Fat-free Dairy</p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup (8 oz) of milk • 1½ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese • 1 cup (8 oz) of yogurt
Fruit	<p>vitamin C helps your body heal cuts and bruises and fight infections</p> <p>Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure and helps regulate your body's fluid balance</p> <p>Fiber helps your digestive system work properly</p>	Apples, oranges, bananas, pears, peaches, grapes, kiwi, berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries) melons (watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew) pineapple, papaya	<p>3 servings of Fruit</p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ small apple = ½ cup • ½ large banana = ½ cup • ½ small wedge of melon = ½ cup • 4 large strawberries = ½ cup • 16 grapes = ½ cup • ½ cup pineapple chunks



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Vegetables	<p>Fiber helps your digestive system work properly</p> <p>Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure and helps regulate your body's fluid balance</p> <p>vitamin A helps your eyes adapt to the dark and keeps your skin healthy</p> <p>vitamin E is important for the development of red blood cells and helps maintain body tissue</p>	Tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, corn, peas, green beans, spinach mushrooms, celery, carrots, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash	<p>5 servings of Vegetables</p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ large tomato = ½ cup • ½ cup pieces of broccoli, cauliflower • ½ large ear of corn = ½ cup • 1 cup raw spinach = ½ cup • 1 stalk of celery = ½ cup • 1 medium carrot (or 6 baby carrots) = ½ cup • ½ sweet potato = ½ cup
<p>(Whole) Grains</p> <p>Note: Your total servings of Grains is 6 servings a day, but at least half of these should be whole grains*</p>	<p>Carbohydrates help give you energy</p> <p>Fiber helps your digestive system work properly</p> <p>Magnesium helps keep muscles healthy and bones strong</p>	Whole wheat breads, rolls, crackers, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, whole grain cereals, popcorn	<p>3 servings of Whole Grains</p> <p>One serving is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice whole grain bread = 1 oz • 1 cup of whole grain cereal = 1 oz • ½ cup of cooked brown rice = 1 oz • ½ cup of cooked whole grain pasta = 1 oz • 5 whole wheat crackers = 1 oz • ½ cup cooked oatmeal = 1 oz

* Based on an 1800 calorie diet. To find the amount that is right for you, go to www.MyPyramid.gov.