

Daily Food Guide for Preschoolers: 2-4 years old

See the chart below for the daily recommendations for preschooler ages 2 to 4 years old. Choosing a variety of foods from all of the basic food groups helps preschoolers achieve good health.

Food Group Serving per Day	What is a Serving?	Recommended Foods
Grains 3 to 5 servings	1 slice of bread ½ cup pasta or rice 1 medium potato ½ cup of hot cereal 1 cup of cold cereal, dry 1 pancake 4 inches around 1 tortilla 6 inches around (corn or flour) ½ hot dog bun ½ hamburger bun 1 mini whole wheat bagel 3 cups of popped popcorn 5 whole wheat crackers ½ English muffin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make at least half of your grains whole grains • Look for less than 9 grams of sugar or more than 3 grams of fiber on breakfast cereals and bars
Vegetables 1 – 1.5 servings	1 cup, chopped, raw, or cooked 1 large raw whole tomato 3 inches around 2 large celery stalks 11inches to 12 inches long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat a variety of vegetables daily • Make half your plate fruits and vegetables • Serve a rainbow of colors including dark green, red, and orange vegetables
Fruit 1 – 1.5 servings	1 medium sized fresh fruit 1 cup fresh, canned or frozen ½ cup dried fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose whole fruits over fruit juice • Rinse canned fruits before serving

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	8 large strawberries 32 seedless grapes	
Protein: 2- 5 oz/servings	1-ounce cooked beef, fish, poultry, pork ¼ cup cooked beans or lentils 1 egg 1 Tbsp. nut or seed butter ½ ounce nuts or seeds 12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves 1 sandwich slice of lunch meat 2 Tbsp. hummus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bake, broil, grill or sauté meats rather than frying • Trim fat from meat and remove skin from poultry before cooking • Select non-breaded meats
Dairy 2 to 2.5 servings	1 cup (8 ounces) milk 1 cup calcium fortified soy milk 1 cup yogurt 1 ½ - 2 ounces cheese 1/3 cup shredded cheese 2 cups low fat cottage cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk • Include milk or calcium fortified soy/rice milk to meet dairy needs • Limit intake of drinkable yogurts, puddings, frozen yogurts and ice cream because of the high sugar content.

Helpful Tips

- Try new foods by allowing your child to help you prepare the meal
- Avoid sugary beverages including pop, juice, lemonade, fruit punch and Kool-Aid
- Limit fruit juice to 4 ounces or less each day
- Drink water and milk most often
- Limit foods high in saturated fat (like butter) and choose foods higher in unsaturated fats (like olive oil)
- Limit sodium to 2,300 mg per day or less
- Have scheduled meal and snack times

Daily Food Guide for Preschooler *continued...*

- Eat meals and snacks at the dining table
- Limit screen time to 2 hours or less each day

