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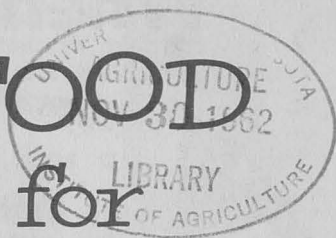
EXTENSION FOLDER 220

DECEMBER 1962

FOOD

for

YOUNG
CHILDREN



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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

When You Plan Meals Remember Your Child

EVERYONE HAS BASIC FOOD NEEDS

When planning your family meals, follow the Daily Food Guide. It will help you select foods that everyone should eat each day. The Daily Food Guide includes foods from the following groups:

Milk Group

Three to 4 cups milk. You can use cheese and foods made with milk such as ice cream for part of this requirement. This group furnishes calcium—a mineral needed for strong bones and good teeth. It also supplies riboflavin (a B vitamin) as well as high quality protein.

Meat Group

Two or more servings of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans, or peas. This group provides protein for growth and repair of body tissues, B vitamins, and iron.

Vegetable-Fruit Group

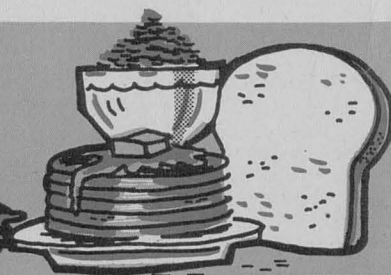
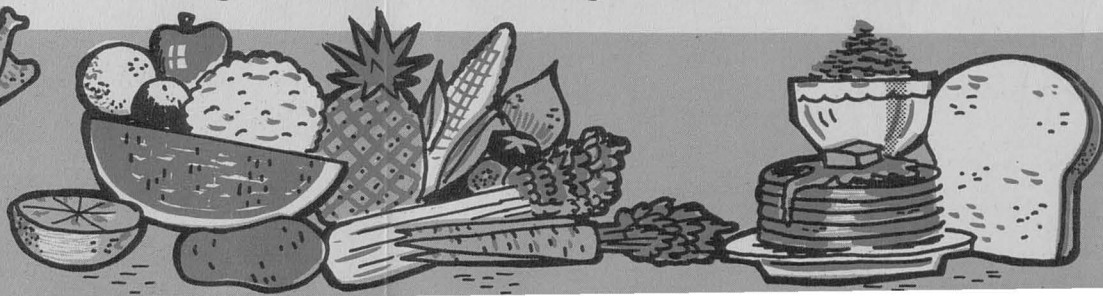
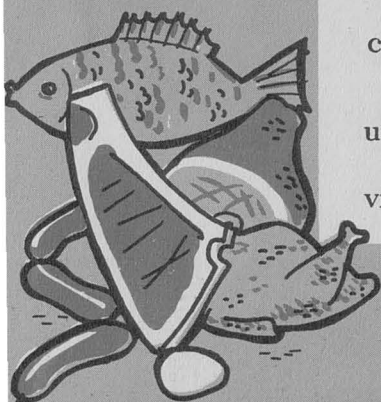
Four or more servings. Serve citrus fruit, tomatoes, or another fruit or vegetable rich in vitamin C. Serve a dark-green or deep-yellow vegetable rich in vitamin A at least every other day.

Bread-Cereal Group

Four or more servings of whole-grain, enriched or restored breads and cereals. This group supplies needed B vitamins and iron.

You may add other foods such as fats, sugar, and unenriched grain products in limited amounts. These round out meals and satisfy appetites.

Foods are low in vitamin D. Your doctor can suggest how to supply this vitamin. During the summer the sun shining on the skin is a source of vitamin D.



Suggested Patterns for Your Family Meals . . .

BREAKFAST

Fruit (vitamin C source)
Cereal with milk and/or egg
Bread and butter
Beverage

LUNCH OR SUPPER

Meat or meat alternate
Salad or vegetable
Bread and butter
Dessert (fruit preferred)
Beverage

DINNER

Meat or meat alternate
Potatoes
Salad or vegetable
Bread and butter
Dessert
Beverage

CHILDREN HAVE FOOD NEEDS TOO

Your child's food needs may not be as great as you think. After a child reaches 2 years he grows slowly. He is about 9% of his adult weight. From birth to 1 year of age a child usually triples his weight. This contrasts sharply to his weight gains from 2 to 9 years of age. Remember this when serving food.

Give small first servings to your child but let him have seconds. He can then decide on how much food he can eat rather than you deciding how much he should eat. This eliminates problems created by a "clean plate policy" and provides your child satisfaction in finishing his serving.

Consider His Likes and Dislikes

Children have eating cycles. Introduce new or different foods when your child is on his cycle's high point. Serve these along with familiar well-liked foods.

Don't be concerned if he dislikes a new food the first time. It takes time to learn to like some foods. You may be wise to offer only one small bite. Your child may have to relearn to eat some foods when they are not served often.

Children have food jags when they seem to like only one or two foods. The jag often disappears in a few days.

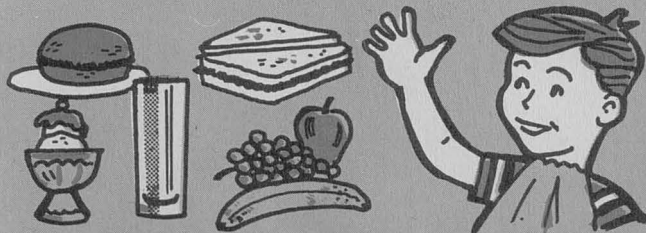
Children dislike hard-to-chew or hard-to-handle foods. They prefer hamburger over steak because less chewing is required.

Children like different food textures. But textures such as stringiness in beans or scum on cocoa are distasteful. They enjoy crisp foods like carrot sticks and toast and soft foods like mashed potatoes and creamy puddings.

Children note color in meals. Colorful foods such as fruit gelatins are often popular.

Children are sensitive to strong food flavors. Their taste buds note flavors more than adults. So include only one strong flavored food in a meal. Tastes of children differ so you can vary common seasonings for your child.

Children like attractive plates. A variety of food shapes arranged appealingly often results in improved eating. They do not like foods mixed together so serve small portions separated carefully. And they prefer food prepared separately in different dishes over dishes that combine a variety of foods.



Children like lukewarm food. It is desirable to serve children first so the food cools before they are ready to eat. This contrasts with adults who like food either hot or cold.

Select Sensible Snacks

Snacks such as apples, milk, and fruit juices have a place in children's eating today. Snacks should contribute to the food included in the Daily Food Guide. Children's stomachs are too small to fill with soft drinks, cookies, and candy that mainly contribute calories.

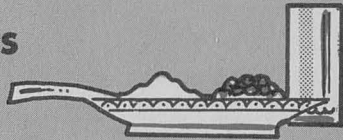
Don't allow snacks to become meals. Snacks should not dull your child's appetite for regular meals. Serve snacks about halfway between meals.

Serve Your Family Together

Preschool children ordinarily eat with other family members. In general, few foods today are not suitable for young children when prepared simply. Highly seasoned foods and rich desserts are not desirable. Fortunately children usually dislike them.

Occasionally adults have food not suitable for children when eating at the same table. Children usually accept the fact that certain foods are not for them.

Eating Habits of Children



Most parents are concerned with how their child eats. Many list eating and eating habits as a major problem. As with many child problems parents often forget to investigate how their child grows and develops.

After critically looking at the total situation you may find you use adult standards of measurement. Remember that your child's world and your world are different.

COMFORT COUNTS AT THE TABLE

If your child is comfortable at the table, he may more easily develop desirable eating habits. A chair that is too high, too low, or too far away causes difficulties he can't control. But you the parent are apt to hold him accountable.

Sitting too high at the table increases distance from plate to mouth. This adds to possibilities of dropping and spilling. Sitting too low makes your child awkward and uncomfortable when using utensils which, at best, are hard to manage. Being too far away is both tiring and messy.

Eating requires great skill and dexterity. Even with good utensils your child will spill some foods. If you consider the refinement necessary in holding a fork or spoon, getting food, and placing it in the mouth, you will be more tolerant of his efforts.

Fingers are the tools with which children are most skilled. They frequently use them when eating. There are many possibilities in "finger foods"—small sandwiches, fruit wedges, meat and cheese strips, celery and carrot sticks. If you are antifingers, you create many unneeded frustrations and problems.

There are periods in most homes when milk is spilled regularly. To avoid some of this, give your child a glass scaled to his hand size and handling capacity and that is heavy bottomed to resist tipping. And keep your child's glass out of his way. After a child takes a drink, he usually places his glass in the most convenient place—the lower right hand side of the plate. Here it is easy to knock over.

Encourage self-help with tools even though it results in some spills. But step in before your child gets too discouraged or angered when he can't manipulate a fork or spoon.

A dish with sides often helps your child learn to get food on his fork. Give your child plenty of time to learn to use eating utensils; this takes several years to accomplish with skill. Individual children gain dexterity in handling tools at different ages.

Your child's food tastes and eating habits are mainly acquired by his observing you and other older family members—not through your preaching. It is important that your family sets a good example.

NEW FOODS

EASY TO CHEW

TEXTURES

ATTRACTIVE PLATES

SMALL PORTIONS

NO STRONG FLAVORS

SENSIBLE SNACKS



A CHECKLIST FOR YOU

When your child develops eating difficulties, check several things.

- Are his servings larger than his needs?
- Are your expectations in keeping with the child's abilities?
- Are between meal snacks of an appropriate size and type and at the best time?
- Are meals at regular times?
- Is your child overtired or overhungry?
- Is your child excited and keyed-up at meals?
- Is mealtime a pleasant time?

If you expect your child to eat more than he needs or wants, force, threats, and bribes may result. If your child snacks too close to mealtime or is scolded or punished just before or during a meal, he can easily find it difficult to eat.

Encourage your child but don't let the issue develop into begging or bribery. After a reasonable time, remove his plate. And be careful that your child doesn't fill up on snacks shortly after the meal.

Because small children like routine, the time of eating is important. Undue hunger produces difficult times. To prevent this, move mealtime ahead or perhaps have your child eat earlier. The danger to guard against is use of mealtime appeasers. These take the edge off the appetite and create eating problems at the table.

If your child is overtired or excited, he finds it difficult to settle down and eat. Prepare him for the meal by letting him know he will soon eat. Call him in from outside well in advance and encourage some quiet activities just before eating. This will help him calm down.

You as parents can help make mealtime pleasant for the whole family. Meals are one of the few times when families are together in this modern world. So don't discuss problems or discipline children. If your child finds mealtime a pleasant, enjoyable time, his appetite and habits will be better than otherwise.

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