

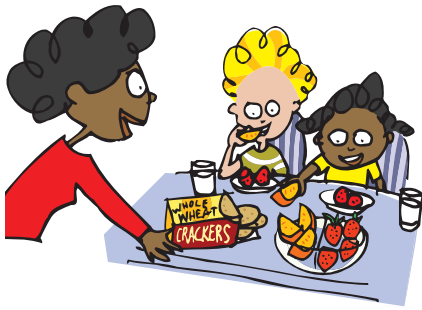


Build a Healthy Plate With Fruits

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Did you know offering fruit is a quick-and-easy way to make meals and snacks healthier and more colorful?

While most toddlers consume enough fruit, most children 4 years and older do not. You can help by offering different fruits on your menu. Offering a variety of fruits during the week can:



- **Teach healthy eating habits children will use for life.**
- **Add color, texture, and flavor to children's plates.**
- **Give children the vitamins and minerals they need to grow and play.**
- **Promote proper digestion, help children feel full, and maintain a healthy weight by providing dietary fiber.**

What types of fruits should I offer?

- ▶ **Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits are all great choices.** Introduce kids to the whole rainbow of fruit choices — each fruit has its own unique flavor and nutrients. Providing different choices each day helps children get the nutrition they need.
- ▶ **Limit fruit juice.** Serve only one ½-cup (4 oz) serving of 100% juice, once per day. While 100% fruit juice can be part of a healthy diet, it does not contain the dietary fiber found in other forms of fruit.
- ▶ **Include good sources of potassium,** such as bananas, dried plums, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, nectarines, raspberries, and orange juice. Potassium can help children maintain a healthy blood pressure.

How can I serve fruits and juices with no added sugars?

It is easy for children to get too many added sugars from foods and beverages. The extra calories from these added sugars can make children feel full before they've had a chance to get the nutrients they need from other foods. Extra calories from added sugars also make it harder for children to maintain a healthy weight. Since fruits are naturally sweet, it can be easy to get children to eat them without adding sweeteners like sugar, corn syrup, and honey. Here are a few tips:



Watch out! There is usually very little fruit in chewy fruit snacks or "fruit-flavored" beverages (often called fruit drinks or fruit punch).



- ▶ **Serve fresh fruit more often than fruit-based desserts,** such as fruit pies, cobblers, and crisps.
- ▶ **Purchase fruit canned in water or 100% fruit juice instead of syrup.** Offer unsweetened applesauce and try sprinkling ground cinnamon on top.

more 'no added sugar' tips on next page ...

... more 'no added sugar' tips

- ▶ **Use frozen fruit** that does not contain added sugars.
- ▶ **Choose 100% fruit juice** instead of fruit-flavored drinks or soda, including cola, lemon lime, root beer, or orange soda.
- ▶ **Offer raisins or other unsweetened dried fruit** instead of chewy fruit snacks or strips, fruit drops, candy, or sweets. * Since it is easy to eat a lot of dried fruit in a short time, it is best to serve unsweetened dried fruit in a ¼-cup serving. Eating ¼ cup of dried fruit is like eating ½ cup of fresh fruit.



*** Hard fruit chunks, chewy fruit snacks, and certain types of candy pose choking hazards. (See Supplement A on page 77 for more information.)**

How can I encourage kids to eat fruits?

It may take time for new foods to be accepted. Kids don't always eat new foods right away. Here are some ways to get kids excited about fruits:



- ▶ **Make food fun and be sure fruits are easy to eat.** Create a rainbow salad with a variety of colors of fruits. Add crushed pineapple, mandarin oranges, or fresh apples to salad mix or coleslaw. Peel or slice fresh oranges.
- ▶ **Have a Fruit Tasting Day.** Encourage each child's family to bring one unique fruit for the group to taste. How about kiwifruit, black grapes, blackberries, pomelo, or lychees?
- ▶ **Cook together.** Children learn about fruits and vegetables when they help prepare them. Young children can help rinse fruits and make "faces" out of pieces of fruits. Pick kitchen tasks that match children's abilities: mash bananas, peel some fruits, or mix ingredients for a fruit salad. See the "Edible Art" activity from Team Nutrition's *Community Nutrition Action Kit*. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/edibleart.pdf>
- ▶ **Explore the "Grow It, Try it, Like It!" educational kit.** Growing fruits, like strawberries, in a garden or container can help increase children's willingness to taste them. <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html>
- ▶ **Eat fruits and kids will too!** They learn from watching you.



Connect With Parents and the Community

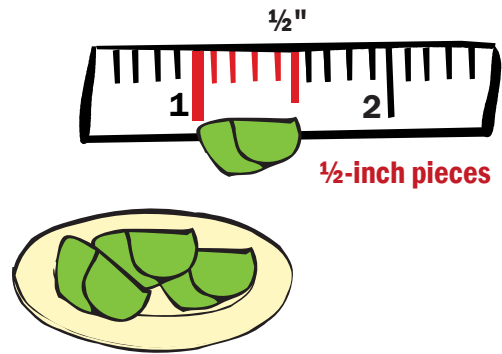
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on juice. http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_19.pdf
- ▶ **Participate in Farm to Child Care activities.** Have farmers deliver fresh, seasonal produce to your child care program, or take the children on a field trip to a local "pick your own" farm. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/farm_to_childcare.htm

How can I keep fruit safe?



For children younger than 4 years old:

- **Cut raw fruit in small pieces no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") to prevent choking.**
- **Slice grapes and other round foods in half, and then cut into smaller pieces.**
- **See Supplement A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



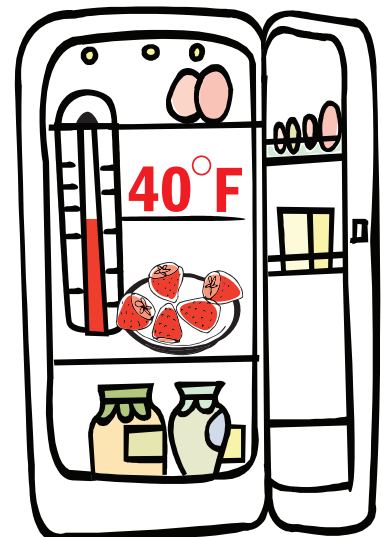
Clean



- ▶ **Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to rinse it first.** That's because it is easy to transfer dirt and bacteria from the peel or rind to the inside of fruit when you are cutting.
- ▶ **Rinse all produce thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking.** Do not use soap or detergent. Scrub firm fruits, such as melons, with a clean produce brush. Dry produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- ▶ **Before opening a can of fruit, wash and dry the top of the can.** Under clean, running water, rub the top of the can briskly with a clean cloth or paper towel to remove dirt and germs from the surface. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after washing.

Prepare and Store Safely

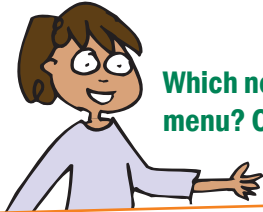
- ▶ **Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits** before preparing or eating. Produce that looks rotten or has mold on it should be thrown away.
- ▶ **Keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood** while shopping, preparing, or storing them.
- ▶ **Store perishable fresh fruits, like strawberries, in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 °F or below.** Refrigerate all produce that is purchased precut or peeled to maintain both quality and safety. If you're not sure whether an item should be refrigerated, ask the produce manager at your supermarket.
- ▶ **See the Food Safety tip sheet on page 55 for more food safety tips.**



Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Circle the fruits on your child care menu.



Which new fruits listed below will you try on your menu? Circle what you plan to try next month.

Apples	Grapes	Pears
Apricots	Honeydew	Pineapple
Bananas	Kiwi fruit	Plums
Blackberries	Mangoes	Raisins
Blueberries	Nectarines	Raspberries
Cantaloupe	Oranges	Strawberries
Cherries	Papaya	Tangerines
Grapefruit	Peaches	Watermelon

How will you offer these fruits next month?

As part of a:

- ☐ **Fruit Salad**
- ☐ **Green Leafy Salad** (add shredded apples, canned pineapple bits, or sliced strawberries to spinach or leaf lettuce)
- ☐ **Sandwich** (add thinly sliced apples to a turkey sandwich)
- ☐ **Fruity Kangaroo Pocket** (raisins, veggies, and fillings in a whole-wheat pita pocket)
- ☐ **Snack**
- ☐ **What other ways will you try to promote fruit?**
Put a check mark next to actions you will try next month. Next month, I will:
☐ **Promote a different “fruit of the week” every week.**
Next month, I will promote:

☐ **Purchase and serve fruit in season to save money.** For example, berries in the summer, apples in the fall, and oranges in the winter.
☐ **Keep three different fruits available to serve as quick snacks.** For example, bananas, peaches canned in 100% juice, and raisins.
- ☐ **Ants on a Log** (celery sticks* with a thin layer of peanut butter and topped with raisins)
- ☐ **Unsweetened Applesauce** topped with cinnamon and raisins
- ☐ **Fruit and Yogurt Parfait** (fruit and low-fat yogurt topped with whole-grain cereal)
- ☐ **Dessert**



CACFP Crediting Tip:
Make sure you offer the full portion of fruit, depending on the meal and the age of the child.



For children younger than 4 years, offer cooked or soft food* to prevent choking.