

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service



K-State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program

DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

January/February

MyPyramid for Preschoolers

Need help feeding “picky” preschoolers? You’ve got it! The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* includes advice on what foods to offer to young children, their growth, ways to encourage physical activity, preventing battles over food, and cooking and eating — making memories — together.

MyPyramid for Preschoolers is designed for parents and caregivers of kids two to five years old. At the website (linked at www.mypyramid.gov), you can enter a child’s age, weight, height and activity level to get a meal plan for that child. Here are a few more of the many helpful tips you can get at the site:



They Learn from Watching You

Eat fruits and veggies, and your kids will too, eventually. Sometimes children need time before they like new foods. Offer a taste of new foods many times. It may take up to a dozen tries before your child accepts a food. Offer only one new food in a meal, in a relaxed manner, and at the beginning, when your child is the most hungry.

Playing Actively Every Day

If a child has 60 minutes of inactivity (such as watching TV), it’s time to have your child get up and do something active for awhile. Now that the weather is colder, play indoor games with your child. For example, take turns throwing and catching a soft foam ball, or sing and dance to lively music.



Let Them Learn by Serving Themselves

At meals, let preschoolers practice serving foods from small bowls that you hold for them. Teach kids to take small amounts. Tell them they can ask for more if they are still hungry later. Let them choose how much to eat.

Sources (Accessed 12/23/08): [MyPyramid for Preschoolers](http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/index.html), USDA, www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/index.html; [Messages for Preschool Moms](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/Files/MomsofPreschoolers_Message.pdf), USDA, www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/Files/MomsofPreschoolers_Message.pdf

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Food Safety for Preschoolers

MyPyramid for Preschoolers, the resource for parents and caregivers of children ages 2 to 5 years old described on page 1 of this issue of *Dining on a Dime*, also provides food safety tips. Here's a sneak preview of what you'll find when you visit the website.

Foods Preschoolers Should Avoid to Prevent Foodborne Illness

- Unpasteurized milk, and products made from unpasteurized milk
 - Raw or partially cooked eggs, and foods containing raw eggs (such as cookie dough, cake batter, homemade ice-cream and homemade eggnog)
 - Raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish and shellfish
 - Unpasteurized juices
 - Raw sprouts
 - Unwashed fruits or vegetables



Tips to Prevent Preschoolers from Choking

- Keep a watchful eye on your child while he or she eats. Have your preschooler eat at the table, or at least while sitting down. Do not let a child play, run, walk or lie down with food in his or her mouth.
- Preschoolers should avoid nuts, chewing gum, hard candy, chips and popcorn.
- Spread peanut butter thinly on bread or crackers. A thick “glob” of peanut butter can cause choking.
- Cut food for preschoolers no larger than 1/2 inch (less than the size of a nickel), and teach them to chew their food well.
 - * Slice hotdogs and sausages lengthwise.
 - * Cut chicken and meat across the grain into small pieces.
 - * Slice grapes, cherry tomatoes and other round foods in half.
 - * Cook carrots and celery sticks until slightly soft, grate them, or cut them into small pieces or thin “matchsticks.”



Importance of hand washing

Preschoolers are much less likely to get sick if they wash their hands properly. Teach them to wash their hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds after using the bathroom, before and after handling food, after handling pets, and when they are dirty.

Source (Accessed 12/18/08): [Smart Safety Tips](http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/FoodSafety/smartsafetytips.html), USDA, www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/FoodSafety/smartsafetytips.html

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local Extension office.

The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



The Dish on Fish

Health experts have been encouraging people to eat more fish for a number of years. Concerns about the safety of fish consumption exist, however. Read on as this issue of *Dining on a Dime* explores whether there is a “catch” to eating more fish.



Pollution Problems

Much of the concern regarding seafood involves fish contaminated with mercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). Polluted water contaminates small fish. As large and older predatory fish feed on small contaminated fish, they accumulate mercury in their skin and fatty tissue.

Eating too much contaminated fish can cause birth defects, brain damage in children, and serious impairment in adults.



Tuna Troubles

Americans eat lots of tuna — fresh, frozen, canned and packaged. “Light” tuna contains less mercury than the more expensive albacore or “white” tuna.

The Salmon Story

Americans are eating more salmon, partly because of the health benefits of omega-3 fats found in fatty fish. Because of the increased demand for salmon, the number of salmon farms has grown. Compared to wild salmon at \$15 per pound, farmed salmon typically sells at \$6 per pound but it has higher levels of mercury and PCBs. Farmed salmon from Washington state and Chile are the safest, while the least safe are from Scotland and the Faroe Islands.

Recommendations for women who are pregnant or will become pregnant, nursing women and young children:

- Reduce PCBs levels by cooking fish and discarding any fat and skin.
- Check with your county health department before eating locally-caught fish.
- Avoid eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish, because of their high concentrations of mercury.
- Eat up to 12 ounces a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Limit intake of albacore or white tuna to 6 ounces per week. Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock and catfish.

When eating fish, the benefits do outweigh the risks, whether choosing wild or farm raised fish. As with anything, eat fish in moderation and adhere to the FDA/EPA guidelines to keep you and your family safe.

Sources (Accessed 12/18/08): 1. Wild Versus Farm-Raised Salmon: Health Benefits and Risks, CR Santerre, American Dietetic Association's SCAN's Pulse 27(Fall 2008):1-5. 2. What You Need to Know about Mercury in Fish and Shellfish (available in 8 languages), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/waterscience/fish/advice

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Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Salmon Patties (Makes 5 patties)

Family meal idea: Enjoy this quick and easy salmon recipe with catsup, if desired, along with steamed broccoli and carrots, whole grain bread or rolls, apple slices, and a glass of lowfat milk.

Ingredients

- 14.75 ounces canned salmon
- 1 egg or 1/4 cup egg substitute
- 1/3 cup uncooked quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1/4 cup very finely chopped onion

Directions

1. Drain salmon well.
2. In a mixing bowl, stir together salmon, egg, uncooked oats and onion. Crush any bones. Form into 5 patties.
3. Heat a skillet sprayed with non-stick cooking spray over medium heat. Place patties in pan. When brown on one side (after about 10 minutes), gently turn and brown the other side.
4. Serve hot. Cover and refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours.

Nutrition Facts: Each salmon patty provides 150 calories, 5 g fat, 5 g carbohydrate, 21 g protein, 110 mg cholesterol, 350 mg sodium and 1 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 2% vitamin A, 0% vitamin C, 25% calcium, 8% iron.



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