

A young child in a pink and white checkered shirt is holding a large slice of watermelon. The child's face is partially visible on the right side of the frame, showing a smile. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text 'EAT RIGHT BE ACTIVE' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, brush-stroke font. A teal diagonal banner at the bottom contains the subtitle 'A Guide for Caregivers of Preschoolers Ages 3 - 5'. The Nutrition Resource Centre logo and name are in the bottom left corner. A faint watermark 'Copyright © 2017 Nutrition Connections' is visible across the center of the image.

EAT RIGHT BE ACTIVE

A Guide for Caregivers of
Preschoolers Ages 3 - 5



NUTRITION RESOURCE CENTRE

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Introduction

We all want the best for our children. We want them to grow up healthy and feeling great. This booklet can help. It is full of everyday ideas that you as a busy parent or caregiver can put into action so your 3 - 5 year old can eat well and be active.

As you read this, think about what ideas or tips you can start using today. You are an important role model for your child. All the efforts you make, big and small, do add up to a healthier child.

Note: In this booklet, “preschooler” refers to children between 3 - 5 years old. Both “him” and “her” are used throughout to describe your preschooler. “Caregiver” refers to parents, other adults/family members and anyone else involved in your child’s care.

Is my child growing well?

Children grow and develop at different rates. Your child may be taller or shorter, lighter or heavier than other preschoolers the same age.

What is most important is the overall growth pattern, not the height or weight at any one time. Ask about the growth pattern of your child when you are visiting his health care provider. If you are concerned about your child’s eating habits, or growth and development, check out the nutrition screen tool called Nutri-eSTEP (www.nutritionscreen.ca) for more information.

Help your child feel good about their body by praising their strengths, abilities and unique personality, not their appearance. Also try not to criticize your own body or the way others look.

Growth depends on many factors

- Family - parents’ size and shape
- Age - children grow fastest as babies and teenagers
- General health - medical conditions, illnesses, medications
- Gender - boys and girls have different growth patterns
- Eating habits - what and how much your child eats
- Activity level - how active your child is, and for how long

Adapted from: *A Health Professional’s Guide for using the WHO Growth Charts for Canada*, Dietitians of Canada, 2014

GOOD TO
KNOW!

Eat right, be active quiz

What is considered “normal” eating and activity for a preschooler may surprise you.

Answer the following questions with a **Yes** or **No**.

1. Should preschoolers be active every day? Yes No

Preschool-aged children love to move and be active. Daily physical activity helps strengthen their heart, lungs, bones and muscles. It also gives them confidence and helps them learn social skills, as well as teaching them movement skills they will need for lifelong physical activity.

2. Is it up to children to decide whether to eat and how much to eat? Yes No

Parents and preschoolers have different jobs when it comes to eating. Your job is to decide what, when and where to offer food. Your child’s job is to decide if and how much to eat from the healthy choices you offer.

3. Is it true that preschoolers are not ready to participate in competitive sports? Yes No

Focus on having fun and practicing skills such as kicking or throwing, rather than competing through racing or keeping score. Preschoolers are not ready for “win/lose” type games and sports. That may make some children feel bad and lose interest in being physically active. Everyone wins when the focus is on building skills and having fun.

4. Is it normal for preschoolers to eat a lot one day and eat very little the next day? Yes No

It is normal for your preschooler's appetite to vary. Keep serving a variety of healthy foods without pressuring him to eat. Make one family meal, not separate meals, even if your child does not eat very much of the meal offered. Serving at least one familiar food at every meal or snack may improve acceptance.

5. Should parents and caregivers be active with their children? Yes No

You are an important role model for your child. You can participate in physical activity by playing games, throwing, catching and kicking a ball. Join parent-and-tot programs or dance to music. Make active choices every day. Together you can take the stairs, walk to the mailbox, take a family walk after dinner or plan active weekends.

6. Is it true that it may take a preschooler 10 or more tries before accepting a new food? Yes No

It is easy to feel discouraged after your child has rejected a food for the third or even the thirteenth time. Keep offering it in small amounts with familiar foods at meal or snack times. Try offering the food prepared in different ways. She may need 10 tries before liking it. Cooking with you and watching you eat a new food helps too.

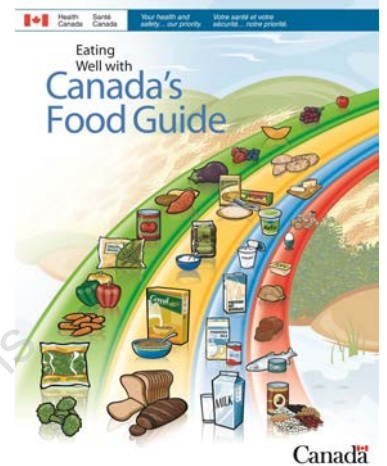
Quiz answers: All Yes

Eat right: The basics

The best way to eat well – for any of us – is to follow *Canada's Food Guide*. Just remember the Food Guide is exactly that: simply a guide, and not what you should expect your child to eat each day. What really counts are his eating habits over time.

Find out more:

To get a copy of the Food Guide go to www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide



GOOD TO KNOW!

Your child eats best when you







- Eat together and allow him to eat at his pace.
- Serve food with child-sized plates, bowls, cups and utensils.
- Turn off the TV, and electronic devices, and put away toys.
- Only offer food when he is seated at the table.
- Serve some food he can eat with his fingers.

Have a nutrition question?

For advice about healthy eating that you can trust, speak to a Registered Dietitian. Call Telehealth Ontario's toll-free telephone information service at 1-866-797-0000.

How much should I offer my preschooler?

Canada's Food Guide gives recommendations on the number of servings for each food group each day. Food Guide servings can be divided into smaller meals and snacks that are offered regularly throughout the day. Offer your child small portions at meals and snacks and let your child decide how much to eat.

Age 3	Age 4&5	What is a Food Guide serving?	It looks like...
Vegetables and Fruit			
4 Food Guide servings	5 Food Guide servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 piece of fruit • 125 mL (½ cup) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables or tomato sauce, and fruit • 250 mL (1 cup) leafy raw vegetables or salad 	 A tennis ball  A fist
Grain Products			
3 Food Guide servings	4 Food Guide servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice of bread • ½ bagel • ½ pita or ½ large tortilla • 125 mL (½ cup) cooked rice, bulgur, quinoa, pasta or couscous • 175 mL (¾ cup) hot cereal • 30 g cold cereal 	 A hockey puck  A hand  A tennis ball  A cupped hand Check the label








Does my child need a vitamin and mineral supplement?

GOOD TO KNOW!

If your child is healthy and his growth is normal, supplements are usually not necessary, even for picky eaters. Supplements do not provide the benefits of food such as calories, fibre, carbohydrate, fat and protein. If you have concerns, talk to your health care provider about the need for a supplement.

Note: Supplements can be dangerous if too many are taken at once. Keep them locked away, out of a child's reach.

How much should I offer my preschooler? Continued

Age 3	Age 4&5	What is a Food Guide serving?	It looks like...
Milk and Alternatives			
2 Food Guide servings	2 Food Guide servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 mL (1 cup) milk or fortified soy beverage • 175 g (¾ cup) yogurt • 50 g (1 ½ oz) hard cheese 	 Small measuring cup  Single container  Size of 2 thumbs
Meat and Alternatives			
1 Food Guide serving	1 Food Guide serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 eggs • 30 mL (2 tbsp) peanut butter or other nut butters • 60 mL (4 tbsp) shelled nuts or seeds • 125 mL (½ cup) or 75 g (2 ½ oz) cooked fish*, shellfish, poultry, lean meat or game meat • 175 mL (¾ cup) cooked and canned beans, hummus, lentils, chickpeas, edamame (soybeans) or tofu 	 1 golf ball  2 golf balls  A hockey puck  A cupped hand

Adapted from: *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. Health Canada, 2007

*See page 15 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.



Canada

Split up your servings

One Food Guide serving can be divided into smaller amounts and served throughout the day. For example, a serving of Meat and Alternatives can be split up and served at two different meals - your child could have an egg at lunch and a few forkfuls of chicken at dinner.

GOOD TO KNOW!

A sample meal plan

Many parents wonder what a sample one-day meal plan for their preschooler might look like. Remember, the amount she eats will vary from meal to meal, day to day and week to week. This is normal. Aim for a regular schedule of 3 meals and 2 - 3 healthy snacks per day.

Breakfast

peanut butter (or other nut butter)
slice whole grain toast
banana
milk

Morning snack

berries (fresh or frozen)
yogurt
water

Lunch

pasta with tomato and meat sauce
broccoli
milk

Afternoon snack

thinly cut carrot sticks
hummus
water

Supper

vegetarian chili
unsweetened fortified soy beverage
pear

After supper snack

cereal
milk
orange



GOOD TO KNOW!

Offer
some
higher fat
nutritious foods

Children need nutritious foods including some higher fat foods like nut butter, nuts and seeds, avocado and hard cheese to meet their energy needs.



Label reading made easy

Eating well is easier if you have healthy choices on hand. When you buy packaged foods, compare the Nutrition Facts on each label.

Step 1. Check the serving size of each brand to see if you are comparing similar amounts.

Step 2. Look at the % Daily Value (% DV). 5% DV or less is a little. 15% DV or more is a lot. Use the % DV to compare food products to make healthier choices.

Step 3. Nutrients you may want **more** of are fibre, calcium and iron.

Step 4. Nutrients you may want **less** of are saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium.

Find out more:

- To learn more about label reading visit the Healthy Canadians website: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca. Select "Food and nutrition" and then "Food labels". You can also visit Unlock Food: www.unlockfood.ca and search "nutrition label".

Nutrition Facts	
Per 90 g serving (2 slices)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 170	
Fat 2.7 g	4 %
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g	5 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 200 mg	8 %
Carbohydrate 36 g	13 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %
Sugars 3 g	
Protein 8 g	
Vitamin A 1 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 2 %	Iron 16 %

Eat right: Making it happen!

Wondering what foods to serve?

The following charts will guide you on what to serve for meals and snacks. Choose whole, fresh foods more often than processed foods. When choosing packaged foods, compare food labels and go for foods that are lower in salt (sodium), saturated and trans fats, and sugar and higher in vitamins, minerals and fibre – a good recipe for healthy, active kids.

Try this:

From the charts listed on the next page, check off the foods you serve your child. Now, do you serve them every day, sometimes, or limit them as suggested? What “Healthy foods to serve most often” are you eating everyday?

Cut costs and boost nutrition

GOOD TO KNOW!

The “Healthy foods to serve most often” (next page) give you a lot of nutritional goodness for your money. You can also:

- Buy fresh vegetables and fruit in season, and buy frozen or canned at other times.
- Buy meat on sale and freeze any extra.
- Substitute beans, lentils, canned fish*, tofu or eggs for meat.
- Choose store brands in larger packages and compare to bulk prices.
- Buy less processed foods. Instead of a small box of flavoured rice, why not choose a large bag of plain brown rice and flavour it yourself?

Make at least half of your grain products 100% whole grain each day

GOOD TO KNOW!

- Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.
- Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal and whole wheat pasta.



*See page 15 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Healthy foods to serve most often

Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh vegetables and fruit • Frozen/low-sodium canned vegetables • Frozen/canned fruits in juice, drained (not syrup) • Homemade vegetable soups (e.g., tomato, carrot, butternut squash) • Unsweetened fruit sauce or fruit blends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain cereals (6 g sugar or less) • Whole grain: bread, bagels, English muffins, pitas, buns, crackers, muffins • Whole grain tortillas • Whole grain noodles, pasta and couscous • Quinoa, brown rice, bulgur • Whole grain roti, chapatti and naan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk: skim, 1% or 2% white • Unsweetened fortified soy beverage • Plain yogurt/kefir • Smoothies made with milk and/or plain yogurt • Hard cheese • Powdered milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tofu • Beans, peas, lentils • Hummus • Nut and/or peanut butter; nuts, seeds (plain, unsalted) • Fish*, seafood, canned fish in water* • Eggs • Chicken, turkey • Lean beef or pork • Game meat

Foods to serve sometimes

Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetables with sauces or breading • 100% fruit juice • Salsa • Canned, low-sodium vegetable soups • Dried fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granola bars with 6 g of sugar or less • Pretzels • Fruit crisps, cobblers • Cookies • Biscuits/scones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate milk • Hot chocolate made with milk • Pudding made with milk • Frozen yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deli meats: roast beef, turkey, ham • Fish sticks, chicken strips, nuggets • Back bacon

Foods, beverages and extras to limit

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastries, danishes • Cakes, pies, sticky buns, donuts, tarts • Cereals or granola bars with more than 6 g of sugar per serving • Cookies with icing • Instant noodle soups • Soft drinks, diet pop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit drinks (punch) • Sports drinks • Syrups • Frozen ice treats • Sherbet, ice cream • Marshmallows • Whipped cream, whipped topping • Candy, chocolate • Flavoured jello 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato chips, nacho chips • Cheezies • French fries • Hot dogs, sausages • Sour cream • Processed-cheese slices • Pepperoni sticks • Strip bacon • Gravy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketchup, mustard, relish • Butter, hard margarine • Cream cheese • Sweetened fruit juices • Custards • Milkshakes • Cheese spreads • Fruit leather/dried fruit bars • Salad dressing
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*See page 15 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Adapted from: *Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment*. Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health and *Healthy Eating and Active Living for your 6 to 12 year old*. Alberta Health and Wellness, 2006

I'm thirsty!

Quench your child's thirst with the right drink at the right time. Serve drinks in an open cup.

Serve:

- **Water first for quenching thirst.** Serve water when your child is thirsty between meals and snacks. Water won't spoil your child's appetite between meals. Remember to serve water especially when preschoolers are active, and when the weather is hot.
- **Milk with meals and snacks.** Children need 500 mL (2 cups) of milk (skim, 1% or 2%) per day. If your child cannot drink milk, substitute with unsweetened fortified soy beverage. Limit or avoid sweetened and flavoured milk and soy beverages. Plant-based beverages (e.g., rice, almond, coconut) are not recommended for children as they are significantly lower in protein and overall calories needed for growing children. Continue to breastfeed for as long as desired.

Limit:

- **Unsweetened fruit juice.** Limit or avoid juice and offer vegetables and fruit instead. 100% fruit juice is a concentrated source of sugar with no fibre. Juice leaves less room for healthy foods and can also lead to cavities. If juice is served, choose 100% juice and limit to 125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) per day for 3 years olds and 125 - 175 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) per day for 4 - 5 year olds. For better oral health, serve juice with meals rather than letting your child sip on juice throughout the day. Diluting juice does not reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Do not serve:

- **Sweetened and diet drinks.** Pop, diet pop, fruit cocktails, fruit drinks, punches, energy drinks, iced tea and lemonade should not be served. They offer no nutrition and take the place of nutritious choices that preschoolers need for healthy growth. Offer water or milk instead.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Make water fun!

You can add flavour to water by adding fruit or vegetables, such as slices of orange, lemon, berries or cucumber. Flavouring your water with real fruit adds flavour without the added sugar, a better option for your child. Experiment with different combinations to see what you and your preschooler like best! Try these examples:

- Sliced strawberries and lemon wedges
- Watermelon chunks and mint pieces
- Cucumber slices and lime wedges



Breakfast

Whether breakfast happens at home, at school, in child care, or a little of both, try to offer your child foods from at least three food groups. That will help him to grow and give him energy to be active. If you are crunched for time in the morning, start preparing the night before.

Here are some ideas to try:

- Slice of whole grain toast with mashed avocado, tomato slice and milk
- Scrambled egg with whole grain toast, apple slices and milk
- Whole grain tortilla with grated cheese and salsa, sliced grapes and fortified soy beverage
- Whole grain oatmeal, berries and milk
- Smoothie made with fruit, milk and yogurt, a small homemade whole grain muffin
- O-shaped dry cereal, banana slices and milk
- Yogurt with berries and whole grain cereal
- Whole grain dry cereal, chunk of cheese, small pear, water



Five simple snacks

Preschoolers need two or three healthy snacks a day to stay energized. Offer a snack about 2½ - 3 hours before the next meal and keep your child active throughout the day so he comes to the table hungry at mealtimes. Serve snacks with milk or water to drink.

Serve simple snacks with foods from 2 - 3 food groups. Circle any ideas your preschooler might enjoy:

1. Smoothie (blend fresh, frozen or canned fruit, milk and yogurt)
2. Cheese cubes, red pepper slices, water
3. Chopped veggies, hummus, pita bread, water
4. Yogurt, berries, water
5. Small oatmeal muffin, pineapple slices, milk

Tooth brushing

GOOD TO KNOW!

Tooth brushing is important to prevent cavities. Help brush your child's teeth two times a day for two minutes with a soft bristle toothbrush.

Loads of lunches

Offer the healthier choices from three or four food groups for a nutrition-packed lunch. Here are some ideas to get you started. Check off ones that your preschooler might enjoy.

- Tortilla (stuffed with salsa, chicken, grated carrot, lettuce and cheese), sliced cherry tomatoes and pepper strips, smoothie made with fruit, milk and yogurt
- Quinoa salad made with chickpeas and cooked sweet potato, melon wedges, yogurt, water
- Homemade bean and vegetable soup, green salad, nectarine, pumpkin loaf, fortified soy beverage
- Whole wheat mini pitas stuffed with egg, tuna* or salmon* salad, sliced cucumber and tomato salad, milk
- Turkey chilli with a whole grain roll, steamed carrots, pear, milk
- Baked beef samosas, steamed broccoli, canned peaches (in juice, drained), milk

*See page 15 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Reduce choking hazards

Any food can cause choking, so always supervise preschoolers when they eat. Have your child sit down, and ensure conversation is calm. You should also:

- Remove pits and seeds from fruit and cut into pieces. Cut grapes in half.
- Grate hard vegetables such as carrots or turnip or cut them into narrow strips.
- Spread peanut butter and other nut butters thinly. Never serve it right off a spoon.
- Cut hot dogs and sausages into long strips, and then into bite-size pieces. (Note: serve processed meats such as deli and luncheon meats, sausage and hot dogs less often).
- Avoid offering popcorn, raisins and hard round candies. These tend to cause choking in children under four years of age.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Food allergies and intolerances

If you think your child has a food allergy or intolerance, talk to his health care provider about allergy tests. If he needs to change his diet, a Registered Dietitian can help. Find out more at Food Allergy Canada at www.foodallergycanada.ca.

Delicious dinners

Good news! Simple meals that are easy to prepare are a favourite with preschoolers. Check off any of these easy and healthy dinners you would like to try.

- Vegetarian chili, whole wheat roll, garden salad, milk
- Chicken and veggie stir fry, whole grain couscous, fresh or frozen fruit over yogurt, milk
- Steamed fish fillets, sweet potatoes, green peas, banana bread, fortified soy beverage
- Omelette made with peppers, tomato and cheese in a whole wheat pita pocket, steamed green beans, yogurt, water
- Grilled salmon*, steamed broccoli and carrots, brown rice, peach smoothie
- Whole grain noodles, tofu, sliced bell peppers, pineapple, milk

*See below for important information on choosing fish wisely.

Find out more:

- Check out “My Menu Planner” and other menu planning tips at www.unlockfood.ca.
- Go to Dietitians of Canada’s website at www.dietitians.ca for recipes, tools and tips for planning, shopping and cooking.

Fabulous fish



GOOD TO KNOW!

Many fish and shellfish are healthy and safe for the entire family to eat. Fish provides protein as well as many nutrients and essential fats. The healthy fats help in the normal development of the brain and eye in young children.

Serve fish or shellfish at least twice a week. Choose fish and shellfish that are low in mercury, such as cod, haddock, rainbow trout, tilapia, sardines, salmon (including canned salmon), canned tuna (choose skipjack, yellowfin or tongol), pollock (Boston bluefish) and shrimp. Mercury is harmful to the developing brain in children of all ages.

Find out more:

- Speak with a Registered Dietitian about choosing fish wisely by calling Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.
- To learn about fish that are safe to eat in your area, see the Government of Ontario’s *Guide to Eating Ontario Fish*, listed on page 24.

Kids in the kitchen

Preschoolers love helping in the kitchen. This is a great chance to interest him in trying new foods. Supervise any activity in the kitchen, taking into account his size, strength and abilities.

Your little helper can:

- Scrub vegetables and fruit, tear lettuce
- Choose vegetable ingredients
- Mix batter
- Pour ingredients
- Spread toppings with a plastic or child-safe knife
- Line a muffin tray with paper muffin cups
- Wipe the table with a clean cloth
- Help set the table

Respect your child's appetite. Let your child decide how much food to eat from the healthy choices you offer. Your job as a caregiver is to provide a variety of healthy foods to choose from. It is the child's job to decide what to eat, or whether to eat at all.

GOOD TO KNOW!

A hand washing sing-along

Get your child in the habit of washing her hands with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds before and after eating or cooking, and after using the bathroom or touching animals.

Teach her to sing a song while washing her hands. A song like "*Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*" takes just about the right length of time. When the song is finished, her hands should be clean.

Top feeding challenges

- 1 Challenge: My child wants to eat the same food all the time.**

Tips: Let your child have his "favourite food," as long as it belongs to one of the four food groups. For example, plain pasta is a favourite with many preschoolers. Keep offering other healthy choices at each meal. He'll soon move on to another favourite (yes, this really is progress).
- 2 Challenge: My child eats very little or skips an entire meal.**

Tips: A skipped meal every once in a while is not a concern as long as your child is growing normally. He may not be hungry. Serve smaller portions and make sure snacks are served about 2 ½ hours before mealtimes so your child comes to the table hungry.
- 3 Challenge: My child does not want to drink milk.**

Tips: Offer a small amount (125 mL or ½ cup) of milk but don't force it. Preschoolers need 500 mL (2 cups) of milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage each day. You can cook with milk too. Try pancakes, oatmeal or soups. Talk with a Registered Dietitian or other health care provider if your child will not drink milk.
- 4 Challenge: My child drinks a lot of milk.**

Tips: Since milk can be filling, too much can spoil your child's appetite for other healthy foods. Too much milk can also put your child at risk for low iron levels. Serve milk in a cup at set times such as at meals. Limit the milk if your child is drinking more than 750 mL (3 cups) a day.
- 5 Challenge: My child refuses to eat meat.**

Tips: Taste and texture turn some preschoolers away from meat. Try ground meat in meatballs or meat loaf, or cut meat into small pieces and serve it in soups, stews and tomato sauce. Add spices and fresh herbs to ground meats to improve acceptance. Try other foods high in iron such as eggs, fish*, peanut butter, soy foods, beans and lentils, and iron-fortified breads. Talk to a Registered Dietitian or other health care provider if your child will not eat any Meat or Alternatives.
- 6 Challenge: My child doesn't like eating vegetables.**

Tips: Be patient and keep serving a variety of vegetables. Your child may be more likely to eat vegetables if she sees you eating them and if new vegetables are served with familiar ones. Involve your child in grocery shopping and have them pick out a vegetable they would like to try. Cooking together, serving finger foods such as veggies with dip or pureeing vegetables into soups and sauces may also work.
- 7 Challenge: My child is very picky.**

Tips: Refusing to eat may be a way of taking control and may have little to do with the actual food. Rather than focusing on what they aren't eating, offer a variety of nutritious foods like vegetables, fruit, eggs, nut butters, yogurt or chicken. THEY need to be in control of what and how much they eat.

* See page 15 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Be active: The basics

Being active comes naturally to preschoolers. They just love to walk, climb, jump and run. Nurture your child's love of physical activity so she can grow, be healthy and enjoy a lifetime of being physically active.

How much physical activity do preschoolers need?

Age (years)	Time (minutes)	Intensity	Goal
3-4	180 minutes (throughout the day)	Any intensity	A variety of activities in different environments. Activities that develop movement skills, and progression towards 60 minutes of energetic play by 5 years of age.
5	60 minutes daily (minimum)	Moderate to vigorous	Vigorous activities at least 3 days/week. Activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least 3 days/week.

Moderate-intensity physical activities will cause children to sweat a little and to breathe harder. Activities like:

- Bike riding
- Playground activities

Vigorous-intensity physical activities will cause children to sweat and be out of breath. Activities like:

- Running
- Swimming

Source: *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines*, www.csep.ca/guidelines.

Being active for at least 60 minutes daily can help children:

GOOD TO KNOW!

- Improve their health and fitness
- Grow stronger
- Perform better in school
- Have fun playing with family and friends
- Feel happier
- Improve their self-confidence
- Learn new skills

Being active: Making it happen!

Five ways to be active

- 1 Boost the fun factor:** Being physically active should be a fun and natural part of your child's day. Play non-competitive games that don't keep score such as kicking a ball back and forth.
- 2 Encourage many different activities for both boys and girls:** Provide all types of equipment to boys and girls such as different kinds of balls, skipping ropes, skates, racquets and hockey sticks.
- 3 Be a role model:** When your child sees you being active and enjoying it, she will try to copy that. Build physical activity into your daily routine. Walk to preschool, ride your bikes together or walk to do small errands with your child. Talk with her often about what you do to be active, whether it is a fitness class or taking a walk at lunch.
- 4 Mix it up:** Plan different activities that fit your child's abilities and interests. Walking, playing, jumping and climbing don't cost anything and are fun. Aim to have a mix of these three types of activities:
 - Endurance: running, jumping and swimming strengthen the heart and lungs.
 - Flexibility: gymnastics and dancing encourage bending, stretching and reaching.
 - Strength: climbing builds strong muscles and bones.
- 5 Stay active in all kinds of weather:** Enjoy a walk in the rain by jumping over puddles. On a warm day, jump over marks or cracks on the sidewalk. Fall and winter seasons provide piles of leaves and mounds of snow to jump into and over. On very cold or wet days, play inside - hide and seek, dance, build a fort or play parachute games using bed sheets and rolled up socks.

Find out more:

Check out "Families that Play Together" information in the children's nutrition section at: www.unlockfood.ca.

Ways to play it safe

Enjoy playing safely with your preschooler. Use this list to start thinking about what you might want to add to your regular safety routine.

- **Equipment:** Replace any damaged safety padding, balls or other equipment. Check that the equipment your child wears, such as a helmet, fits properly.
- **Balls and bats:** Choose balls that are large, soft and flexible. Use lightweight, plastic bats and racquets.
- **Helmets:** Your child must wear a safety-approved helmet when riding a tricycle, bike or scooter or when skating, tobogganing or playing hockey. Find out more about safety-approved helmets and other safety equipment by visiting the website below.
- **Shoes:** Buy well-fitting shoes with a flexible sole, nylon mesh, good heel support, and wiggle room for toes.
- **Sun safety:** Protect your child from the sun with a wide-brimmed hat, long sleeves, lightweight clothing and sunscreen.
- **Playground:** Make sure the equipment and ground area are free of broken glass, sharp objects or other debris. Children under five should not play on playground equipment over five feet tall.

Find out more:

- Get more safety tips at: www.parachutecanada.org.
- Contact your local public health unit.

Replace screen time with active time

Physical activity should be a fun and natural part of a child's life. Unfortunately, as early as 2 - 3 years of age, children become less active as they are introduced to television and computers.

Encourage more activity by limiting screen time for children aged 2 - 5 to under 1 hour per day.

Source: *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines*, Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (www.csep.ca/guidelines) and *Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world*, Canadian Pediatric Society, 2017.

GOOD TO KNOW!

10 activities you can do together

1. Walk to the store, mailbox, library or child care.
2. Visit a pick-your-own farm. Check out www.harvestontario.com.
3. Plant a garden, rake leaves or shovel snow.
4. Create indoor and outdoor play areas where you can roll, climb, jump and tumble together.
5. Explore a beach, pond or woods together.
6. Join or start a parent and tot active living group.
7. Be active with music: dance or sing songs with actions.
8. "Adopt" a park or part of a trail near your home for your family to look after.
9. Have an outdoor scavenger hunt looking for mail boxes, stop signs, rocks, leaves or colours. Inside, hide toys, books and stuffed animals for your child to find.
10. Explore a children's museum.

A little praise goes a long way

GOOD TO KNOW!

Praise your child often, both during and after activities, for things like:

- Social skills. "That was nice sharing with your skipping rope."
- Effort. "Wow, you really ran fast to catch that ball. Way to go!"
- Improved skill. "That was great! You stopped the soccer ball using your foot. Now can you kick it back to me?"
- For just being him. "That was so much fun exploring the creek with you."

Cooperative or competitive?

GOOD TO KNOW!

Choose cooperative rather than competitive games for preschoolers. No child is eliminated from play in a cooperative game. There may be some competition involved, but the emphasis is on participation, challenge and fun. Instead of losing and sitting out, players may switch teams throughout the game so that everyone can learn to be a team player.

Skill building is important

Being active should be all about having fun. At the same time, you can choose suitable activities to help her to learn, practice and master basic skills, such as running, kicking or water play. Building these skills now will help her later to master skills, such as hitting a tennis ball over a net.

Activities good for children turning 3 years old:

- Walking and running in one direction, and learning to change direction.
- Throwing and retrieving a large ball.
- Kicking a large ball.
- Water play and swimming with an adult.
- Riding a tricycle.

Activities good for 3 and 4 year olds:

- Walking, running, skipping and galloping in different directions.
- New ball skills: bouncing, catching with two hands, throwing with accuracy.
- Kicking a ball to a partner and stopping a ball (likely using hands).
- Swimming with an adult.
- Riding a tricycle or bicycle with training wheels.

Activities good for 5 year olds:

- Skipping and running games such as tag.
- Games with objects of various sizes, shapes and textures such as balls, bean bags, scoops and bats.
- Kicking a ball with force, stopping the ball with a foot.
- Swimming with adult supervision, swimming lessons.
- Riding a bicycle with or without training wheels.
- Small group games with few rules, emphasizing cooperation rather than competition.

Need more information?

Unlock Food & Telehealth Ontario

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit Unlock Food at: www.unlockfood.ca. You can speak also to a Registered Dietitian directly by calling Telehealth Ontario's toll-free telephone information service at 1-866-797-0000.

Websites

- Active For Life: www.activeforlife.com
- Allergy/Asthma Information Association: www.aaia.ca
- Anaphylaxis Canada: www.anaphylaxis.ca
- Best Start Resource Centre: www.beststart.org
- Canada's Food Guide: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
- Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines: www.csep.ca/guidelines
- Canadian Safe School Network: www.canadiansafeschools.com
- Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca
- Ellyn Satter: www.ellynsatterinstitute.org
- Family Food Patch Youtube video series: www.youtube.com/channel/UCB1cquEpGBcspH-K1H6hpNQ
- Food Allergy Canada: www.foodallergycanada.ca/
- Foodland Ontario – Local Food Recipes: www.ontario.ca/foodland-ontario
- Government of Ontario – Guide to Eating Ontario Fish (2017-18): www.ontario.ca/page/eating-ontario-fish-2017-18
- Have a Ball Together!: <http://haveaballtogether.ca/>
- Nutri-eSTEP – Nutrition Screening Tool for Toddlers and Preschoolers: www.nutritionscreen.ca
- Parachute Canada: www.parachutecanada.org
- ParticipACTION: www.participaction.com
- Raising our Healthy Kids: www.raisingourhealthykids.com
- Understanding nutrition labels: <http://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Videos/Nutrition-Labeling.aspx>

Need more information?

Consult your public health unit, community health centre or family health team for information, referrals, handouts and more about healthy eating, physical activity and safety.

- To find out where your local public health unit is, visit www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx.
- To find out where your local community health centre is, visit www.aohc.org and click on "Find a centre".
- To find out where your local family health team is, visit http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/fht/fht_progress.aspx.

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Laura Atkinson BSc, RD – York Region Public Health

Ginette Blake, RD – Middlesex-London Health Unit

Melissa Cardinal, RD – Eastern Ontario Health Unit

Katie Neil, RD, MAN, MPH (c) – Oxford County Public Health

Lindsay Siple, MHS (c) – Physical Activity Resource Centre (PARC)

Candace AQUI, RD – Nutrition Resource Centre

Erin Colburn, MHSc., RD – Nutrition Resource Centre

Donna Smith, MPH, RD – Nutrition Resource

Mary Wales, MSc – Nutrition Resource Centre

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www.nutritionrc.ca, info@opha.on.ca