

## Feeding Your Preschooler 3 to 5 Years Old

Three-year-olds can feed themselves and use a spoon and fork well. They will still need to have their food cut up and to learn good eating behavior. Preschoolers need to eat often. They usually eat 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks a day. Use these guidelines to make sure your child is getting enough food each day.

### A preschool child should eat:

- 3 servings of milk (3/4 cup each), cheese (1 ounce each) or yogurt (1/2 cup each)
- 6 servings of cereal, pasta or rice (1/3 to 1/2 cup each); or bread, rolls or muffins (3/4 to 1 slice each)
- 5 servings of fruits and vegetables (1/4 to 1/2 cup each), 1 small fruit or 1/2 cup juice
- 2 servings of fish, chicken, beef, pork or turkey (1 ounce each); eggs (1) or peanut butter (2 tablespoons each)
- Fats and sweets should be added to the diet in small amounts.

Skim milk and 2% milk may be used instead of whole milk at this age. Offer your child a wide variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables. Snacks may be a big part of a preschooler's diet. Healthy snacks that are made from fruits, vegetables and grains are good choices.

### Here are some snack ideas:

- Raw vegetables\* served with dips, peanut butter or string cheese
- Fresh fruit, dried fruit\* or fruit mixed with yogurt
- Bread or bagels topped with low fat cream cheese and raisins\* or apple slices
- Muffins made with carrots, zucchini, pumpkin, bananas, dates\* or raisins\*
- Popcorn\*, pretzels, nuts\*, or graham crackers
- Whole grain cereals
- English muffins or pita bread with pizza sauce, cheese and/or vegetables
- Flour tortillas with refried beans, chili or cheese rolled inside

\*These foods may cause choking. Watch young preschoolers carefully.

As preschoolers grow, they may become more active and begin to eat more. It's important for the active preschooler to drink enough fluid (at least 5-6 cups a day), especially in hot weather. Encourage water, as well as juices and milk. To encourage good eating behavior, have set times for meals and snacks, and have your preschooler eat at the table. Preschoolers are old enough to help prepare simple dishes and help set the table. Children are more willing to try new foods if they help make them.