



# For The Early Learning Centre Sector Nutrition Fact Sheet Exploring The Five Food Groups



**Eating a balanced diet that is rich in a variety of vitamins and minerals is key to ensure proper growth, development and immunity in younger children.**

**The Australian Dietary Guidelines (ADG) recommend that a variety of food from each of the five food groups is consumed each day to help children achieve their overall nutrient goals.**

**In this fact sheet, we explore the five food groups, including how much we should aim from each food group per day.**

## WHAT ARE THE FIVE FOOD GROUPS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

The five groups are:

1. Vegetables
2. Fruit
3. Grains
4. Lean meat and meat alternatives
5. Dairy and dairy alternatives

Consuming a variety of food from each of the five food groups is essential to provide us with nutrients that are necessary for good health. Each food group offers a unique set of nutrients that our bodies need to function properly. Water is also essential to maintain hydration and to assist with a number of vital functions in the body. It's important to drink plenty of water throughout the day.



## VEGETABLES

Vegetables are rich in a number of essential vitamins, minerals and fibre, which is important for immunity and gut health. The ADG guidelines recommends that boys and girls aged 2-3 years consume 2 ½ serves of vegetables per day, and those aged 4-8 years, consume 4 ½ serves of vegetables per day.

One serve of vegetables is equal to:

- ½ cup of cooked vegetables
- ½ medium potato
- 1 cup of salad
- ½ cup tinned vegetables



## FRUIT

Fruit is an excellent source of vitamins and antioxidants such as vitamin C which are important for immunity and general health. The ADG recommends that boys and girls 2-3 years of age consume 1 serve of fruit per day, whilst boys and girls 4-8 years of age consume 1 ½ serves of fruit per day.

One serve of fruit is equal to:

- 1 medium fruit e.g. apple or banana
- 1 cup tinned fruit
- 2 smaller fruits e.g. peaches or nectarines





## GRAINS

Grains are an important source of fibre, as well as a number of nutrients including iron and vitamin B. The ADG recommends that boys and girls aged 2-8 years consume 4 serves of grains per day.

One serve is equal to:

- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup of cooked rice
- ¾ cup of cereal
- ½ cup of cooked pasta



## DAIRY AND DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

Dairy and dairy alternatives provide a significant amount of calcium and protein in the diet. The ADG recommends that boys and girls aged 2-3 years consume 1 ½ serves of dairy/dairy alternatives per day, increasing to 2 serves for boys aged 4-8 years.

One serve is equal to:

- 1 cup of milk
- 2 slices of cheese
- ¾ cup of yoghurt
- 1 cup of soy milk



## LEAN MEAT AND MEAT ALTERNATIVES

The lean meat and meat alternatives food group provides an excellent source of protein, as well as minerals such as iron and zinc. The ADG recommends that boys and girls aged 2-3 years consume 1 serve of lean meat/meat alternatives per day, whilst girls and boys aged 4-8 years consume 1 ½ serves per day.

One serve is equal to:

- 65g of red meat
- 80g of chicken
- 100g of fish
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup of baked beans
- 170g of tofu



**For more information, please visit:**

Eat For Health - Healthy Eating For Children

[https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/n55f\\_children\\_brochure\\_0.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-09/n55f_children_brochure_0.pdf)

Eat For Health - The Five Food Groups

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups>

