



Focus on Health Nutrition, and Physical Activity Information for Parents

F.S. 381.0056

St. Johns County School District, Health Services Dept.
School Year 2026-27



Nutrition for kids: Guidelines for a Healthy Diet

Source: Mayo Clinic—Dietary Guidelines by age can be found at

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/nutrition-for-kids/art-20049335>

Food packed with nutrients — with no or limited sugar, saturated fat, or salt added to it — is considered nutrient dense. Focusing on nutrient-dense foods helps kids get the nutrients they need while limiting over-all calories. Consider these nutrient-dense foods:

- **Protein.** Choose seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.
- **Fruits.** Encourage your child to eat a variety of fresh, canned, frozen or dried fruits. Look for canned fruit that says it's light or packed in its own juice. This means it's low in added sugar. Keep in mind that 1/4 cup of dried fruit counts as one serving of fruit.
- **Vegetables.** Serve a variety of fresh, canned, frozen or dried vegetables. Choose peas or beans, along with colorful vegetables each week. When selecting canned or frozen vegetables, look for ones that are lower in sodium.
- **Grains.** Choose whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread or pasta, oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, or brown or wild rice.
- **Dairy.** Encourage your child to eat and drink fat-free or low-fat dairy products, such as milk, yogurt and cheese. Fortified soy beverages also count as dairy.

Aim to limit your child's calories from:

- **Added sugar.** Naturally occurring sugars, such as those in fruit and milk, aren't added sugars. Examples of added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup and honey. To avoid added sugar, check nutrition labels. Choose cereals with minimal added sugars. Avoid sodas and other drinks with added sugars. Limit juice food, such as red meat, hot dogs, poultry, butter and other full-fat dairy products. Pizza, sandwiches, burgers and burritos are a common source of saturated fat. Desserts such as cakes and ice cream are another common source of saturated fat. When cooking, look for ways to replace saturated fats with vegetable and nut oils, which provide essential fatty acids and vitamin E.
- **Salt.** Most children in the United States have too much salt in their daily diets. Another name for salt is sodium. Salt can hide in sandwiches, where the sodium in bread, meat, condiments and toppings adds up. Processed foods, such as pizza, pasta dishes and soup, often have high amounts of salt. Encourage snacking on fruits and vegetables instead of chips and cookies. Check nutrition labels and look for products low in sodium.



Making Healthy Snacks—Energy Bites

Source: The Kitchen

Directions

- Microwave nut butter and honey until warm (about 30 seconds). Stir in vanilla extract if using and kosher salt until combined.
- Stir in old-fashioned rolled oats, finely chopped roasted nuts, and mini chocolate chips until combined.
- Scoop the mixture out in 1 1/2 tablespoon portions and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Roll each portion into a ball (lightly coat your hands with vegetable oil if the mixture is sticky). Refrigerate until firm, about 45 minutes.

Note: You can make energy bite mixture up to one day in advance. Cover and refrigerate and then let come to room temperature before rolling into balls the next day.

The energy bites can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week or frozen for up to three months.

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup smooth nut butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 1/2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1/4 cup finely chopped roasted nuts
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips



School-Aged Children and Adolescents Physical Activity Recommendations

Source: CDC Healthy Schools

<https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity-education/guidelines/index.html>

Children and adolescents aged 6–17 years should do 60 minutes (one hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily. Include activities that make their hearts beat faster, build muscles and strengthen bones.

It is important to offer young people options and encouragement to participate in physical activities. The activities should be varied, age appropriate, and enjoyable.

Aerobic: Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity. There should include vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 3 days a week. This includes brisk walking, running, bicycling, swimming, soccer, basketball.

Muscle-strengthening: Children and adolescents should do muscle-strengthening physical activity at least 3 days a week. This includes games such as tug of war, push-ups, some forms of yoga, climbing and swinging on playground equipment.

Bone-strengthening: Children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity at least 3 days a week. This includes hopping, skipping, jump roping, dancing, and gymnastics.

Focus on Health

Water Safety Information for Parents

F.S. 1003.225

St. Johns County School District, Health Services Dept.

School Year 2026-2027



Water Safety for Kids and Teens

Source: Florida Department of Children and Families and Healthy Children.Org

Teaching water safety and how to swim is a key part of reducing child drownings. In Florida, drownings are one of the leading causes of child deaths.

The following information is important to teach to your teen or younger child:

- **Always supervise; it saves lives.** Drowning can happen quickly and quietly, which is why actively watching your swimmer is a necessity. Make sure your teen knows to swim only where there are lifeguards on duty and to never swim alone. Urge them to use the buddy system, even when swimming with large groups of friends. It is important for young children to know that the fun can't begin until a "Water Watcher" is present. Once an adult is watching, the swimming fun can start. Make sure your child knows never to go near the water alone and always has a swimming partner.
- **Wear a lifejacket.** Like adults, adolescents should always wear life jackets whenever they are on boats, jet skis and other watercraft. Younger children should also wear life jackets including while in a floating device or on a dock. If a child cannot swim or is an inexperienced swimmer, lifejackets should be utilized at all times while in the water. Never rely on inflatable tubes and rafts as life preservers.
- **Learn how to swim.** Swimming lessons have been shown to reduce drowning incidents, which is why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 4 and older learn to swim. Even if your child has taken swimming lessons, never assume that their risk of drowning has subsided. Always be cautious of pool floats or toys that could interfere with your child in the water. If your family hasn't been able to learn basic swim and water survival skills yet, it's not too late! Many organizations offer lessons specifically geared toward teens and adults.
- **Teach your teen to always enter the water for the first time feet first.** It is important to know the water's depth beforehand. Also, going in feet first helps them know whether there are underwater hazards like large rocks that can't be seen from the surface. Make sure they look for—and follow—any "No Diving" instructions posted. Diving into unsafe water can lead to serious, and sometimes permanent, spinal injuries.
- **If there is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or find an adult.** Although a child may have had swimming lessons or is utilizing a life jacket, sometimes water accidents do happen. Make sure your child knows to call for help or find an adult when trouble occurs. When watching a child swim, always make sure to have a cell phone nearby in order to call 911 if a dangerous situation arises. Stress the importance of staying away from pool drains and suction fittings in order to have a fun, safe swimming experience.

To find swimming lessons in your area. Contact your local YMCA, city facilities, or swim school.

YMCAs in St. Johns County are listed below

Brown Family YMCA
170 Landrum Lane
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
Website:
<https://fcymca.org/locations/ponte-vedra-ymca/>

St. Augustine YMCA
500 Pope Road
St. Augustine, FL 32080
Website:
<http://fcymca.org/locations/st-augustine-ymca/>

Solomon Calhoun Community Center Pool
1300 Duval Street
St. Augustine, FL 32084

For More Information on Swim Lessons go to
<https://fcymca.org/youth-swim/>