



# Nutrition Edition

Your Guide to Child Health and Nutrition



Nutrition Edition  
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CACFPRoundtable.org

## Move Nutrition Security Forward

IN MARCH 2022, during the celebration of National Nutrition Month, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) revealed their



new initiative to ensure *Nutrition Security* for all Americans. This initiative was motivated by the alarming evidence that poor nutrition leads to diet-related diseases like obesity, diabetes and heart disease, which are responsible for over 600,000 deaths each year in our country. Cases of these diseases increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially among communities of color, populations living in remote areas and in Tribal communities.

“The COVID-19 pandemic brought food insecurity to the forefront of the national conversation and shined a new light on the devastating toll of chronic disease, with an estimated two-thirds of COVID hospitalizations in the U.S. related to diet-related diseases,” announced Agriculture Secretary, Tom Vilsack.<sup>1</sup>

The urgency to ensure timely, equitable access to healthy, safe and affordable food sources for all people is imperative; thankfully, many of these changes are already moving forward. The plan summarizes what USDA calls a four-pillar strategic approach to move toward nutrition security for all Americans. These strategies include:

- **Meaningful Support:** Providing nutrition support throughout all stages of life
- **Healthy Food:** Connecting all Americans with healthy, safe, affordable food sources
- **Collaborative Action:** Developing, translating and enacting nutrition science through partnership
- **Equitable Systems:** Prioritizing equity every step of the way

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## Cultural Cuisines

> Spain <



### Origins & Roles of Food

Spain is the largest producer of olive oil and its cultivation is believed to be a result of the colonization of the Greeks and Phoenicians. Arabs introduced the cultivation of rice and irrigation techniques that facilitated the cultivation of sugarcane, watermelon, lemons and oranges. Moors influenced pastries and introduced *escabeche* to preserve foods by using vinegar.

### Food Customs

Lunch is a large meal with several courses. It can last for over an hour and is followed by plenty of conversation. Dinner is eaten late in the evening, between 8:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

### Staple Foods

Olive oil, tomatoes, potatoes, maize, peppers, vanilla, cocoa, rice, grapes, meat, fish, white beans, cabbage, bananas, yams, mangoes, avocados and persimmons are staple foods. Paella, a classic rice dish and tapas, are very popular in Spain.

### Dining Etiquette

*Sobremesa*, “upon the table,” is the custom of relaxing at the table after a meal. It can last for several hours in the summer and during weekends and holidays. The *siesta* is another important tradition, stemming from farmworkers who rested after lunch, before returning to work. Now, businesses and stores close for about two hours in the afternoon to allow people to have meals at home with their families.

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- Food Funny

# Move Nutrition Security Forward

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## WHAT IS NUTRITION SECURITY?

Food security focuses on efforts to provide everyone with *enough* to eat; nutrition security builds on food security to further ensure that there is access to the *right* kinds of food and calories. In other words, nutrition security ensures “consistent access to nutritious foods that promote optimal health and well-being for all Americans, throughout all stages of life.”<sup>2</sup>

USDA is taking action by improving diet quality through the current Federal nutrition assistance programs and ensuring equal access to healthy foods and services by:

- Increasing SNAP benefits to ensure participants can afford a healthy and practical diet
- Updating school nutrition standards that are practical and long lasting
- Revising the WIC food packages with recommendations by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)
- Promoting nutrition education that includes data-driven strategies that acknowledge diversity, so that people can put these dietary guidelines into action

When people from all communities, ethnicities, geographical locations and socioeconomic backgrounds have access to nutrition security, the benefits will be astronomical. It will impact academic achievement and lower financial stress, which in turn will increase productivity, narrow health disparities and decrease the high cost of health care.

## WHAT CAN CHILD CARE PROVIDERS DO TO PROMOTE NUTRITION SECURITY?

While this initiative continues to develop and show outcomes, we can take small steps today to promote nutrition security in our own programs and environments.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program’s focus is to ensure that all ages of children in all kinds of childcare and afterschool settings have equitable access to nutritious foods. Your participation in this program is the first and most important step in making a difference and we applaud you for it!

You are already making a difference for families by minimizing the stress related to providing daily meals; you serve a variety of foods and provide the right amount of nutrients and calories needed for children to grow up healthy. Under your care, children have access to nutritious, consistent and predictable meals every day and are learning healthy habits for life.

Here are some ways in which you can make your impact even more powerful:

- Become a source of information about nutrition assistance programs like WIC and other local organizations by spreading the word among the families you serve, friends and neighbors
- Promote participation in the School Lunch program for school age children
- Support breastfeeding mothers to continue breastfeeding and offer on-site breastfeeding options
- Teach children where our foods come from and plant a garden
- Buy and serve locally grown produce in season as much as possible
- Share your menus with the families in your program
- Increase servings of whole grains
- Choose to make homemade versions of “popular” foods to eliminate processed foods from your menus
- Serve plant forward menus (reduce amounts of animal products so that meals are made up of mostly plants) while also honoring dietary, religious or cultural needs

For more suggestions or resources, contact your local Food Program and feel free to share your own ideas and initiatives.

— *Alejandra Marín Santos,*  
*Child Health and Nutrition Specialist, CocoKids*

<sup>1</sup> Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Press Release No. USDA No.0062.22 <https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/usda-0062.22>

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture. “USDA Actions on Nutrition Security” infographic. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/usda-actions-nutrition-security>

## KIDS' HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

# Osteoporosis and Kids: How to Build Healthy Bones in Childhood

**OSTEOPOROSIS** is a disease that happens when your body loses too much bone, makes too little bone or both. Many think osteoporosis only affects older people. But it's actually a disease that begins in childhood, with symptoms that appear in adulthood.

People reach their peak bone mass in their early 20s. After that, it is a matter of holding on to what you have and trying to keep a balance between removal and replacement of old bone – not adding new bone.

So, what can you do to help children reach their optimal peak bone mass so they have healthy bones as adults?

## DEVELOP HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Healthy habits start in childhood and getting enough calcium and vitamin D is key. Kids can develop a taste for leafy green vegetables, nuts like almonds and milk to drink. Replace soft drinks with calcium-rich dairy drinks. If a child dislikes dairy products or is has a milk allergy, consider fortified, non-dairy beverages.

It's also important that children eat enough calories, especially if he or she is an athlete. Eating disorders are more common in kids than you might realize and are a disaster for bone health during these formative years. Watch out for weight loss or low energy in children and seek out a dietitian if you aren't sure if kids are getting enough calories.

## GET ACTIVE

Get kids moving for the joy of moving and they'll develop a lifelong love of being active. Research shows that high-impact exercise, such as jumping, is the most powerful way to build bones and muscle, but it also has the highest risk of injury. A sprinkle of higher impact exercise along with lower intensity activities is a winning combination.

For kids in elementary and middle school, it's important for them to have time to chase, run, climb and then rest when tired. This helps develop independent thinking and neuromuscular coordination, all while having fun. Old-fashioned games like hopscotch and jumping rope are also



great ways to build bone, balance and muscle. Walking as a family is a chance for both adults and children to exercise and spend quality time with each other.

Fight to keep recess in schools. Let local school boards know that physical education is crucial not only for exercise, but to develop the skills necessary to lead an active, healthy lifestyle as adults.

Organized sports are another opportunity for kids to get exercise and develop neuromuscular skills but beware of overuse injuries. Help children develop a well-rounded set of movement patterns to prevent repeatedly stressing the same body parts and avoid burnout.

## LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Phones, computers, TVs, video games—screens are a big part of our world but screen time can take a lot of time away from physical activity if you let it. Consider limiting screen time to allow kids to get at least an hour of exercise every day.

The great thing about nurturing good bone health is that these habits are good for the rest of your health, too. So, let's think about ways to help children eat right and stay active to ensure a lifetime of healthy bones!

— *Christina Morganti, MD, Orthopedic Surgeon and Medical Director of the Osteoporosis Program at AAMC Orthopedics, Originally published in The Beacon, by Luminis Health*

## Snack Ideas



## Authentic Gazpacho

- Roma tomatoes, halved and cored ..... 2 pounds
- Cucumber, peeled and seeded ..... 1 small
- Green bell pepper, cored .... 1
- Red onion, peeled ..... ½ small
- Garlic cloves, peeled..... 2

- Olive oil ..... 3 Tbsp
- Sherry vinegar ..... 2 Tbsp
- Salt ..... ½ tsp
- Pepper ..... ½ tsp
- Cumin, ground ..... ½ tsp
- White bread, thick slice ..... 1

1. Combine all ingredients, except bread, in a blender or food processor. Puree for 1 minute, or until the soup reaches desired consistency.
2. Remove crust from the bread and soak in soup until soft. Puree until smooth. Taste and season with extra salt, pepper and/or cumin if needed.
3. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3 to 4 hours or until completely chilled.
4. Serve cold, topped with garnishes such as homemade croutons, chopped fresh herbs, a drizzle of olive oil or any leftover chopped gazpacho ingredients.

Yield: 10 servings

Meets requirement for vegetable

— [gimmesomeoven.com/authentic-gazpacho-recipe/](http://gimmesomeoven.com/authentic-gazpacho-recipe/)



### Fuel & Fitness

#### SNACKING MAKES GOOD SENSE

Nutritious snacks keep you feeling energized throughout the day! They help you beat energy slumps and keep your metabolic rate up, which helps in maintaining a healthy weight. For example, a small handful of nuts with a piece of fresh fruit has fiber and healthy fats that give you energy that lasts. Eating junk food snacks, high in refined carbohydrates and added sugars such as cookies or a candy bar causes blood sugar to rise quickly, followed by a surge in insulin, leading to a drop in blood sugar which can leave you feeling tired, cranky and hungry for more.



Regular snacks are especially important for children. They have tiny tummies and therefore need small, frequent meals. Children consume about one quarter of their daily calories from snacks, so leave junk food snacks for rare occasions and serve up a variety of nutritious foods at snack time.

This Nutrition Edition is brought to you by your local Food Program:



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Food **Q.** What's hard to beat for breakfast?  
Funny **A.** A boiled egg!