



Nutrition and Lead Exposure

There is no safe level of lead in the body. Lead can harm a child's growth, behavior and ability to learn, and can affect them for life. However, foods rich in iron, calcium, and vitamin C can help a child's body absorb less lead.

You can calculate the recommended size and number of servings of each food group based on your child's age and gender at:
<https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan>

IRON

Normal levels of iron work to protect the body from absorption of lead. Your body uses iron to make red blood cells, to build a healthy brain, for normal energy use and to maintain a healthy immune system.

Dietary sources of IRON include:



Ø Meat and seafood, especially lean red meats

Ø Beans (canned, fresh, or dried)



Ø Dark-green leafy vegetables, including (spinach, kale, collard greens, turnip greens, and mustard greens)

Ø Eggs



Ø Nut butters made of peanuts or almonds

Ø Iron-fortified cereals and breads



Ø Fruits, including: (raisins, dried peaches, dried apricots, prunes, and figs)

CALCIUM

Calcium builds strong bones and teeth as well as helps reduce lead absorption.

Dietary sources of CALCIUM include:



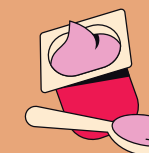
Ø Dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium, including all forms of: milk, yogurt, ice cream, cheese, cottage cheese, and products made with calcium-fortified milk substitutes.



Ø Seafood, especially sardines and canned salmon.



Ø Other foods, including: corn tortillas, broccoli, collard or mustard greens, spinach, kale, tofu, and calcium-fortified orange juice.



VITAMIN C

Vitamin C and iron rich foods work together to reduce lead absorption. Vitamin C helps build healthy blood vessels, teeth, and bones. Foods containing vitamin C should be served with iron-rich foods to help the body absorb iron.

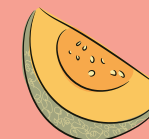
Dietary sources of VITAMIN C include:



Ø Vegetables, including: broccoli, cabbage, green peas, tomatoes, cauliflower, sweet green and red peppers, summer squash, potatoes, dark green leafy vegetables kale, collard greens, turnip greens, and mustard greens.

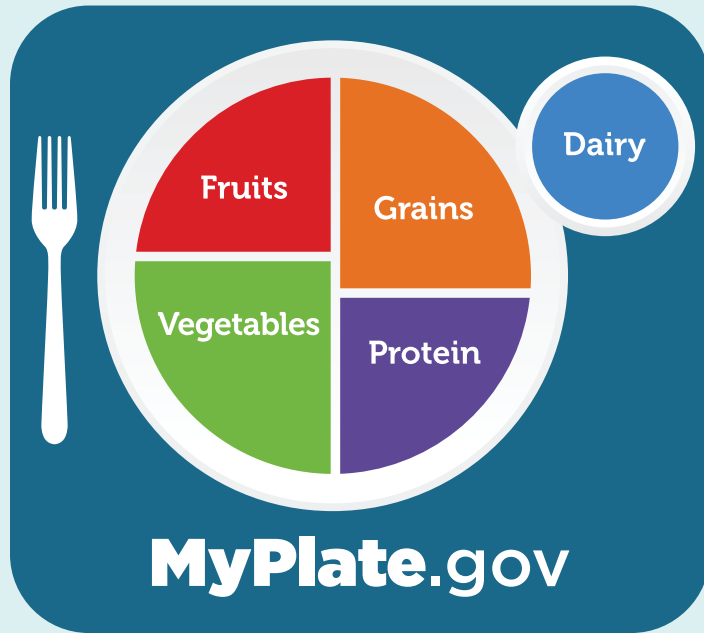


Ø Fruits including: oranges and orange juice, grapefruits and grapefruit juice, melons, berries, kiwi, guava, mango, papaya, persimmon, and cantaloupe.



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Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with full stomachs, so ensuring regular healthy meals and snacks is recommended.



THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Ø Wash your child's hand and face frequently, especially before meals.
- Ø Wash all food thoroughly with safe water sources prior to eating. This will remove soil or lead dust that may be on its surface.
- Ø Sit at a freshly-cleaned table while eating. Walking around or sitting on the floor could lead to exposure to lead from other surfaces.
- Ø Do not eat food or drink water that has been cooked or stored in lead-crystal, glazed pottery, or porcelain cookware from other countries.
- Ø Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula. Heat up cold water on the stove or in a microwave if hot or warm water is needed. Use water from a safe source to mix baby formula. Boiling water does not remove lead from water.
- Ø Avoid eating food grown in lead contaminated soil.

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