

NUTRITION BITS AND BITES

Vitamin pills for kids?



Three questions to ask yourself before giving your child a vitamin:

1. Does my child eat fruit or vegetables?
2. Does my child eat whole grain or fortified grain products?
3. Does my child eat protein foods (nuts, seeds, lentils, beans, eggs, meat, or dairy products)?

Does my picky eater need a vitamin pill?

If you have a picky eater, you may have wondered, "Are they getting all the nutrients they need?"

Keep in mind these pointers as you evaluate your child's diet:

- Our bodies are able to get the nutrients they need from a wide variety of diets. If your child is eating foods from most of the food groups, they are probably getting what they need (see sidebar). Food is the best source of nutrients, because they are in the right amount and right combination for our bodies to use.
- Children require small amounts of food to meet their nutrient needs. One egg and a few bites of chicken will take care of your four-year-old's protein needs for a day.
- The only supplements most kids need are vitamin D (during the winter), omega-3 (if they don't eat fatty fish) and vitamin B12 (if they are vegan or vegetarian).

If you are still unsure whether your child is getting the nutrients they need, schedule an appointment with one of our Southern Health-Santé Sud Registered Dietitians. We will be glad to discuss your concerns with you.

Smoothie Guide

(makes 2 cups—usually enough for 2 people)

Smoothies can be a great choice as a quick breakfast or snack after activities. Place ingredients 1 to 4 in a blender and mix. Adjust the amount of liquid, if needed.

1. START WITH A LIQUID BASE (1 CUP)

- Plain milk
- Milk alternatives (eg. unsweetened soy or almond beverages)
- Plain water

2. ADD FRUIT AND VEGETABLE (1 CUP)

- Mix up your favourite combination of fruits
- Use fresh or frozen fruit (frozen fruit will thicken)
- Fresh vegetables (such as kale, spinach or grated carrots) add nutrition and flavour

3. ADD NUTRIENT BOOSTERS

Extra ingredients if looking to boost protein, calories, fibre, or healthy fats:

- Protein: Greek yogurt, silken tofu, and skim milk powder are great additions to increase protein
- Fibre: add some bran or oats
- Healthy fats: nuts, nut butter, ground flax seed, hemp seed

4. ADD EXTRA FLAVOURS

- Sweeten with some honey, maple syrup, agave nectar or 100% fruit juice
- Increase flavour with some ground spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, ginger
- Brighten up the flavour with some citrus zest, such as lemon, orange, lime

Younger children: can help decide on ingredients, measure, put into blender and push buttons

Older kids and teens: can make on their own if they know how to safely operate blender and use knives safely.

See these for ideas at Unlockfood.ca:

[Vitamins and Minerals](#)

[Cooking with Kids](#)

Leftover smoothies can be frozen in popsicle molds to enjoy another day!



** Refer to the Allergy Newsletter (September issue) for substitution ideas.

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/finding-care/health-info-for-you/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/>

To access previous school nutrition newsletters, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/whats-happening/nutritional-newsletters/>

Contact Dial-a-Dietitian 1-877-830-2892 Health Links 1-888-315-9257 Nutrition Services Team 1-204-856-2055

Created by Registered Dietitians from Southern Health-Santé Sud

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