

## Child Friendly Guidelines: Children and Teenagers

These nutritional guidelines have been put together by Registered Dietitians from Centrepont to provide an optional resource for staff and volunteers running IFAN food banks and other food aid providers when possible. They are evidence-based and could be used to support beneficiaries to receive a nutritionally balanced parcel of food which takes individual needs such as health conditions, culture and kitchen facilities into account.

- Eating well is important to maintain good health, physically and mentally. A varied diet provides the **energy and nutrients** for children to grow and develop and to maintain health in adulthood.
- Everyone should aim to eat at least **5 portions** (80g or more) of different fruits and vegetables daily as they provide vitamins, minerals and fibre needed for good health.



- Only one small glass of fruit juice counts as one of your five a day, as it is high in sugar which **can damage teeth**.
- Meals should be based around **starchy foods** such as potatoes, rice and other grains. **Wholegrain varieties** are a healthy option for adults and older children. For **children under 5 very high fibre foods should be limited** as they can be filling and may not provide enough energy.
- **Protein and iron** are needed for growth and repair of the body, blood and brain development. Good sources of protein and iron include meat, fish, eggs, nuts and pulses (e.g. beans and lentils).
- **Calcium and Vitamin D** help with healthy bone growth. Dairy products such as milk and yoghurt provide protein and children's main source of calcium.
- **Fortified non-dairy alternatives**, with no added sugar (such as soya or oat drink), can be given to children from age 1, but their diet must be adjusted as these drinks often contain lower amounts of energy and protein.
- **A lot of sugar in the diet can lead to tooth decay**. Limiting the amount of high sugar products such as sweets and soft drinks, particularly between meals, and brushing teeth twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste will help protect dental health.
- It is important **not to add salt or sugar to foods for babies** and young children and to avoid processed foods designed for adults such as ready meals, snack foods & take out.

The following questions may be useful to ask the beneficiary, if you have the ability to further tailor their parcel:

- How old are your children? *Guidelines cover infants, under 5s, children and teens.*
- Are there any foods that you or your family don't like or don't eat?
- Do you or any of your family have any special food requirements? *E.g. allergies, vegetarian, halal. Refer to other guidelines for more information.*
- Which cooking facilities do you have available? *In cases where there are limited or no cooking facilities check Oven Free Guidelines and offer cooked meals if available.*
- Would you like any Family Friendly Recipe Cards? *All recipes are suitable for children over 5, but the family friendly recipes have been purposefully developed for families.*



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The following food items would all be good options for a family with children over the age of 5 at home, try to include some from each group:

## Carbohydrate-rich foods:

- Grains like rice, barley, buckwheat
- Pasta and noodles
- Fortified breakfast cereals (no added sugar) e.g. shredded wheat
- Tinned potatoes
- Porridge oats and oat bars
- Crackers and bread products
- Flour (if possible ask which type)
- Microwave pouches of grains

## Protein-rich foods:

- Any tinned fish (e.g. tuna, mackerel, sardines)
- Tinned or jarred meat (e.g. hotdogs, corned beef)
- Tinned beans (e.g. kidney beans, chickpeas, baked beans)
- Dried pulses (e.g. lentils, beans)
- Nuts or nut butter
- Tofu (long life)

## Fruits and vegetables:

- Tomato/garlic/ginger paste
- Any tinned vegetables
- Tinned fruit (in water or juice)
- Jars of vegetables e.g. olives, pickles
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots
- Long life vegetable/fruit juice
- Bottled lemon or lime juice

## Dairy and alternatives:

- UHT Milk (whole or semi-skimmed)
- Unsweetened fortified milk alternatives e.g. almond, soya, oat
- Tinned dairy-based deserts (e.g. rice pudding, custard, semolina)
- Soya custard deserts
- Dried milk powder

## Other items to include:

Oil, spices, herbs (if possible ask for cultural preference) to add flavour without adding salt. Jars of pasta or curry sauces and condiments. Tea and coffee for adults. Foods such as biscuits, chocolate and crisps can be included but ideally in small amounts e.g. 1 packet of biscuits.

## If you have access to fresh or frozen food you could also add:

Any fresh or frozen fruits, vegetables, fish and meat. Bread and bakery products, dairy products, eggs and hummus are all good choices. Fresh starchy tubers (e.g. Potatoes/Cassava/Plantain/Yam). Cooked meals can be offered if available.

## An example 3 day parcel for a family of 4:

- 1 large pack of porridge oats/cereal
- 2 packs of pasta
- 2 packs of rice or couscous
- 1 box of cereal/oat bars
- 4 tins of beans
- 1 pack of lentils
- 4 tins of fruit in water/juice
- 3 tins of vegetables
- 1 jar of vegetables e.g. olives
- 2 tins of tomatoes
- Tomato puree
- 2 cartons of milk (dairy or alternative)
- 2 tins of dairy-based or soya deserts
- 2 jars of pasta/curry sauce
- 4 tins of fish/meat
- 1 pack of tea or coffee (for adults)
- 500ml bottle of oil
- 1 condiment e.g. soya sauce/ketchup
- 1 pack of biscuits
- Seasoning e.g. garlic/chilli powder
- 1 carton of long life fruit juice

The following recipe cards are child-friendly:

- Chickpea curry
- 2 ingredient cookies
- Lentil shepherd's pie
- Loaded beans on toast
- Tuna fishcakes
- Easy tuna pasta

For more information on healthy eating for families:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>
- <https://www.bda.uk.com/resourceDetail/printPdf/?resource=healthy-eating-for-children>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>