

The Sports Nutrition Guide and Recipes for Primary and Secondary School Children

Deblina Biswas [Child Nutrition](#)

As much as we'd like to think of them as small versions of adults, children and their nutritional needs are different on a different level altogether. It's a wrong belief to nurse that by simply cutting the calories, adding tutti-frutti flavor, and luring the kids with cartoon characters, we can substitute kid's food with adult food. We can also not give in to the demands of the older children by providing them [unhealthy options in the name of food](#); nutrition for kids can be a tricky affair.



Just by giving them formula supplements, we think we have catered to all their nutritional needs. If we consider a child's growing up phase: The body builds a foundation of bone, muscles, and other structures; the brain and neural connections build patterns that last a lifetime, and an insouciant [immune system grows](#) mature as it bears the brunt from invaders attacking from all sides.

These and other developments need constant monitoring and if the child's nutritional requirements are not catered to in the right way at the right time, the consequences can be telling and of course far-reaching. Nutrition for kids should be given importance, for their overall development.

Nutritional Needs of School- Going Children

This is the right time to look after the health requirements of primary school going children. They are influenced by what they see around them, their parents, their peers, so it is all the more important that they imbibe and

practice good and [healthy eating habits](#). When you are feeding a preschooler, you must understand the following guidelines so that they develop the right way, as far as their physical and mental growth are concerned:



- Children need a plethora of different foods from different food groups each day.
- Snacks are an integral part of a [healthy diet for active children](#).
- Make snacks nutritious, not just high in taste but high in nutritive values as well.
- Teach them the attributes of sharing.
- Discuss the day's happenings with your child at mealtimes.
- Do not over-feed your child, encourage the child to speak up when they are full.
- Pack up your lunch but give it a nutritional punch.
- Let children help you with food preparation and meal planning.
- Encourage physical activities for the whole family.
- Encourage children to drink lots of plain water.

Encourage Physical Activities and Nutrition in Primary and Secondary School Children

It is important to give more emphasis on physical activities, which rules out computer games and mobile games by default. For primary school children, 60 minutes of sports activity is recommended each day, and no more than two hours of watching TV, DVDs or computer games. Physical activity is one of the most important parts of good health.



Invigorate your child to indulge in some activity each day, indulge in a hobby, play a game or be involved in the sport, as weight is one of the chief concerns of parents of kids. They will always worry about the fact their child is not eating enough and hence not gaining enough weight. Following some simple guidelines can help your child remain active.

To increase your nutritional activity for kids, try to:

- Watch less television, and that includes the entire family.
- Participate in an activity together to encourage fitness and sporting spirit.
- Encourage your child while watching them play sports.
- Encourage daily activity, not just exercise.
- Choose to walk short distances and ditch cars for the same.

Some Recipe Ideas for Breakfast, Lunch, Snacks, and Dinner for Primary school going Children

As we have discussed earlier, a child's nutritional needs varies according to their age-groups. We need to ensure that a child gets to eat a variety of foods from different food groups like:

1. Vegetables – of different types and colors
2. Fruit, seasonal and fresh.
3. Grain foods – whole grain and high – fiber foods such as bread, cereals, rice or pasta
4. Proteins – lean meat, fish, chicken, eggs and legumes like beans.
5. Dairy – milk, yogurt or cheese.

1. Almond Bars

This is a [protein-packed recipe](#) which helps your kid stay active and energized right from morning for the greater part of the day. An ideal way to break your fast.



Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup almond butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 cups whole-grain cereal flakes
- 2 cups oat and bran O's cereal
- 2 tablespoons chopped, unsweetened dried cherries

Method:

1. Coat an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, microwave the almond butter and honey on high for 30 seconds, then stir until blended. In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine the cereal flakes, O's, and cherries. Microwave on high for 1 1/2 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds until warmed.
2. Gradually stir the almond butter mixture into the cereal until thoroughly and evenly coated. Press into the prepared pan. Refrigerate until set and firm. Cut into 10 bars.

2. Chicken Nuggets and Roasted Potatoes

A combination of chicken and potatoes is always part of a child's favorite food combo, and if it is home-made and healthy, it can be your favorite food as well. It can be included in the nutritional foods for kids.



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoon – Ranch Dressing Seasoning Packet
- 1 cup – Greek yogurt, plain
- 2 cup – panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
- 1 1/2 pound – chicken breast
- 4 medium – potato, red
- 1/2 tablespoon – olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon – salt
- 1/8 teaspoon – black pepper, ground

Directions:

1. In a large Ziploc bag, add potatoes and olive oil. Shake to coat evenly. Add 1 c. bread crumbs + 1 tbsp. ranch dressing mix; toss the bag around to evenly coat once more. Transfer to a large (I used 17×11) rimmed cookie sheet greased with a light coating of olive oil.
2. In a separate large Ziploc bag add chicken breast cubes and Greek yogurt; toss the bag around to evenly coat chicken.
3. Place bread crumbs and remaining ranch seasoning in a shallow bowl; mix well. Shake off any excess yogurt from chicken then dip in breadcrumbs, turning to coat evenly. Transfer to baking sheet.
4. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Bake at 375°F for 45-55 min or until chicken reaches an internal temp of 165 degrees F or juices run clear. Turn on the broiler and continue baking 1-2 min to brown the chicken if needed.

3. Vegetable Pilau

A mix of veggies and rice can sound boring, but not when you toss it make it look and sound exotic. This is sure to appeal to your picky toddler.



Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 3 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 ½ cups basmati rice
- 3 cups hot water
- 1 salt reduced vegetable stock cube, crumbled
- 2 zucchini, thinly sliced
- 200 grams green beans, halved
- 425 grams can tuna chunk-style in [olive oil blend](#), drained and flaked.
- 50-gram baby spinach leaves
- 1/3 cup shredded fresh basil
- ½ cup low-fat plain greek style yogurt to serve
- Lemon wedges to serve

Method:

1. Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add onion. Stir over heat 2 minutes, until softened slightly.
2. Add curry powder and rice. Stir over heat a further minute.
3. Stir in water and stock cube. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to a gentle simmer. Cover and simmer for 8 minutes.
4. Stir in zucchini and beans. Cover and simmer a further 8-10 minutes until stock is absorbed and rice is tender.
5. Remove from heat. Gently stir in tuna, spinach, and basil. Stand covered 3 minutes. Serve with yogurt and lemon wedges.

Nutrition needs for Secondary School Kids, Especially Sports Nutrition

This is the time when you know your kids are growing up, because they are more aware of their wants also more vociferous of spelling out their food choices. If they are veering towards sports, you need to be more careful of their specific food needs and their [sports nutrition](#). Keep a tab on foods which include a mix of proteins, carbohydrates and fats like:



- Proteins (found in meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, beans, nuts, and dairy foods)
- Carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are the best sources)
- Vitamins (as found in fruits and vegetables, for instance) and minerals like calcium (found in dairy products)
- Good quality fats like grass-fed butter, avocados, nuts and seeds.
- **Dairy** – Encourage your child to eat and drink fat-free or low-fat dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, cheese or fortified soy beverages.
- **Fluids** – Plenty of [water and juices](#) to compensate for the fluid loss immediately after a game or sports.

Recipes for Sports Enthusiasts and Secondary School Going Children

If your child is a sports enthusiast, you have to be doubly careful about his or her nutrition needs. As kids start to savor freedom and pocket money, they have a tendency to eat foods which are high in saturated fats and very little on nutrient value. Now is the time to educate them about the power of nutritious foods and how it can do a world of good to them.

1. Mushroom Burgers

Mushrooms are a good replacement for some meats which are high in saturated fats. Eat mushrooms which are low in calories and high in selenium, iron, and vitamin D.

**Ingredients:**

- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 portabella mushroom caps, each about 4 to 5 inches in diameter
- 4 hamburger buns or rolls

Method:

1. Peel and mince the garlic.
2. Combine garlic, soy sauce, and olive oil. Set aside.
3. Remove mushroom stems and reserve for another use. Wipe mushroom caps with a damp paper towel to remove any debris.
4. Place mushrooms cap in a large shallow dish, feathery gills facing down. Rub or brush one-quarter of the marinade over the tops, coating the cap surface.
5. Flip the caps over and spoon the sauce on the gill side of the mushrooms, coating the edges as well. (You should have just enough sauce to drizzle on the underside, not enough to saturate.) Marinate at least 15 minutes or up to 2 hours.
6. Grill over medium heat, or broil (as described in Chapter 13), about 4 minutes on each side, or until softened, but not mushy.
7. Serve on hamburger buns or wheat rolls with your favorite hamburger condiments, or with a dab of hummus sauce.

2. Date Smoothie

Dates are high in natural sugar content, and also rich in potassium, a mineral required for active athletes to maintain the fluid balance of the body. In fact, while bananas are high in vitamins C and A, dates have almost double the amount of potassium, more iron, twice as much protein, and a whopping six times as much calcium as bananas. You can have them whole, or use them as natural sweeteners in desserts or whip it up in a smoothie. It can be considered a good food for sports nutrition.



Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup chopped dates
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup 2% milk
- 1/2 pint vanilla frozen yogurt (1 cup)

Method:

1. Place the dates in the blender and blend until more finely chopped.
2. Add the milk and blend until mixed.
3. Blend in the frozen yogurt until frothy.
4. Pour into a tall, chilled glass and serve immediately. Don't be concerned if some small bits of dates remain—enjoy these tasty, chewy morsels with a spoon.

3. Oven-fried Potatoes

If there is one thing that kids will agree upon, it's their universal love for french fries. We have a healthier version of it that is not only high in taste but high in nutrition as well. The starchy potatoes are great for growing children.



Ingredients:

- 2 pounds Idaho potatoes
- 2 to 3 tablespoons corn oil or other vegetable oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Line a jelly roll pan with foil for easy clean up.
2. Wash the potatoes well, but don't peel them. Pat dry.
3. Slice the potatoes into halves, then into quarters lengthwise. Placing your knife at the pointed edge of each quarter, carefully slice down into thin wedges. Even if this seems like a lot of potatoes, they shrink considerably during cooking.
4. Pour the oil into the center of the baking sheet. Use clean hands to push the potato wedges around in the oil, flipping as needed to coat on all sides.
5. Line the wedges up on their sides. Sprinkle the tops with salt to taste and plenty of fresh cracked pepper.
6. Bake about 45 minutes, depending on the thickness of the potatoes. Check the potatoes after 35 minutes to make sure they're not browning too much. Serve hot out of the oven as a side dish or snack.

The importance of childhood nutrition in general and **sports nutrition** in particular, cannot be stressed enough as the right nutrition can help to build a strong foundation to become strong and healthy adults. Children need love, care and patience to help them incorporate good eating habits, which is sure to leave them in good stead in the future.