

Food groups for 1- to 5-year-olds

Food group	Foods included	Main nutrients	Recommended servings	Average serving size
Group 1: Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods	All types of bread: chapattis, tortilla wraps, rolls, bagels, breadsticks, crackers, oatcakes, plain baked naan bread. Potatoes, pasta, rice and breakfast cereals	B vitamins, iron and fibre	Four servings per day	½–1 large slice of bread, ½–1 bread roll, English muffin or pitta. 2–4 mini breadsticks, 1–2 crackers or 1–2 oatcakes. 1–2 small potatoes 3–4 tablespoons cooked pasta or rice
Group 2: Fruits and vegetables	Fruit and vegetables in all forms, whether fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Pulses (e.g. baked beans and lentils) and diluted pure fruit juices can be counted as a serving, but only once in a day	Vitamins A and C, zinc, iron and fibre	Five servings per day	Serving sizes are smaller than those for adults. A rule of thumb is what a young child can hold in their hand. Examples include: 1–2 tablespoons cooked vegetables, small bowl vegetable soup, ½ large fruit or one small fruit
Group 3: Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein	Meat and fish (fresh, frozen or canned), eggs, nuts, pulses and beans (e.g. kidney beans, baked beans and including soya and soya products). Oily fish includes fresh, canned or frozen salmon, mackerel, trout, herring, sardines or pilchards and fresh or frozen tuna	Protein, iron, zinc, vitamins A and D. Oily fish are important as they contain beneficial fats called long-chain omega-3 fatty acids	Two servings per day	1 slice of meat or chicken, 1–2 tablespoons or 2–3 tablespoons with a sauce; ½–1 fillet of fish or 1–2 tablespoons of pulses or meat alternatives
Group 4: Milk and dairy foods	Milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais, milk puddings	Protein, calcium and vitamin A	Three servings per day	Milk: ½–1 cup (100–150 ml); 1–2 tablespoons grated cheese, small pot (60 g) or ½ large pot of yogurt. 3–4 tablespoons milk pudding

Typical fruit and vegetable serving sizes

The serving sizes listed below are typical average amounts for a 1- to 5-year-old and should be used as a guide. Smaller children may need smaller servings, i.e. one serving is what a young child can hold in their hand.

Vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned)	1–2 tablespoons cooked vegetables
Pulses	½–1 tablespoons
Homemade vegetable soup	Small bowl
Salad	Small bowl or 4–6 raw vegetable sticks
Vegetables in composites, such as vegetable chilli	1–2 heaped tablespoons per serving of the recipe
Banana	½–1 small
Very large fruit, such as melon	½–1 small slice
Medium fruit, such as apples	½ fruit
Small fruit, such as plums	1–2 fruits
Very small fruit, such as blackberries	1–2 tablespoons
Dried fruit	½–1 tablespoon or 2–5 pieces of dried fruit
Fruit in composites, such as stewed fruit in apple pie	1–2 tablespoons
Frozen fruit/canned fruit	1–2 heaped tablespoons
Pure unsweetened fruit juice	½–1 small glass (50 ml juice + 50 ml water)