



Get the Lead Out
Facts About

Nutrition and Lead Poisoning

The only way to totally prevent lead poisoning and to lower blood lead levels is to remove all sources of lead. However, certain eating habits and cleanliness can influence the amount of lead absorbed by a child.

Regular meals

Feeding your child regular meals and snacks will help his/her body to absorb less lead. An empty stomach absorbs more lead. Children should be fed three meals and two or three snacks each day. Use the Food Guide Pyramid on the reverse side to help choose healthy foods.

Foods high in iron

To the body, lead and iron look very similar. If a child has a low body store of iron, the body may absorb more lead. Iron-rich foods should be served at least twice a day. The following foods are rich in iron:

- red meats and poultry
- oysters, clams and mussels
- dry beans and peas
- nuts or sunflower seeds
- fish, tuna and salmon
- iron-fortified cereals
- raisins, dates and prunes
- green leafy vegetables

Talk to your doctor/nurse/nutritionist for age appropriate foods for your child.

Foods high in calcium

Foods high in calcium also help the body to absorb less lead. Serve foods high in calcium at least three times each day. Foods rich in calcium include the following:

- milk and milk products
- calcium fortified tofu
- calcium-enriched orange juice
- cheese and cottage cheese
- yogurt
- salmon with bones

Foods high in vitamin C

Vitamin C helps the body to absorb iron and calcium. Foods that contain vitamin C should be served at least once each day. Some foods that are high in vitamin C include the following:

- oranges
- potatoes
- grapefruit
- limes
- tomatoes
- tangerines
- lemons
- kiwi fruit
- strawberries
- sweet potatoes
- broccoli
- cantaloupe

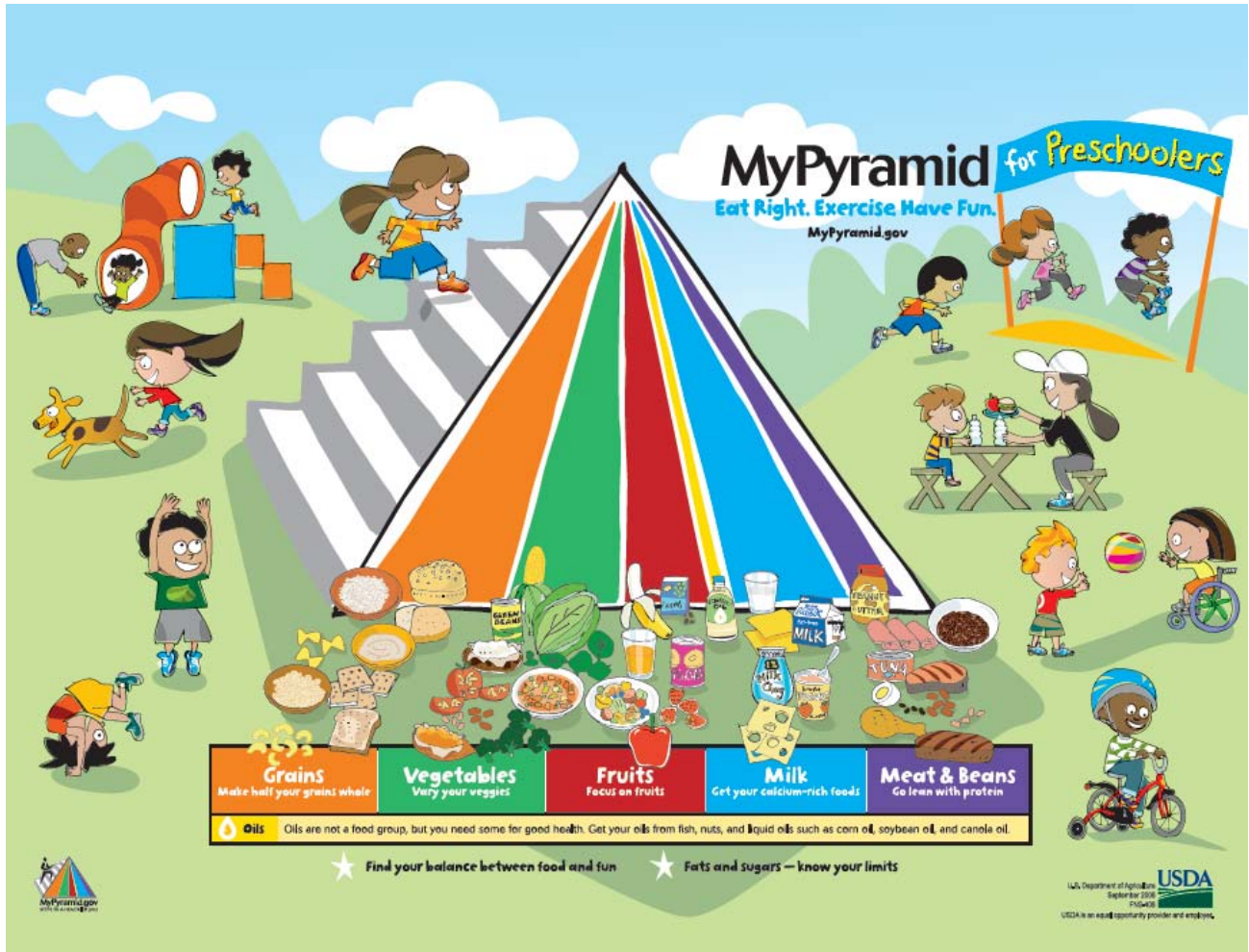
Other foods to avoid

- Foods stored in lead-soldered cans, glazed ceramic dishes or leaded crystal
- Vegetables grown in lead-contaminated soil
- Foods or drinks made with lead-contaminated water (Always use cold water for cooking or drinking; let the cold water run for a few minutes before using it.)
- Some candies from Mexico may contain lead

Good hygiene

Staying clean is also important in protecting children against lead poisoning. Follow these suggestions:

- Wash a child's hands, face and mouth often, especially before meals.
- Wash bottle nipples, pacifiers and toys that are placed in children's mouths often.
- Keep children's fingernails short, so lead dust cannot be easily trapped.
- Always eat at a clean table. Food that has been dropped on the ground should be discarded.



For more information on lead poisoning, please contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-3517, 866-909-3572, or TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466; or call your local health department.