

Rational Nutrition of Children in Preschool Institutions

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Abstract: This article provides an overview of rational nutrition in preschool institutions, emphasizing that proper nutrition for children aged 3-6 contributes to their physical and mental development. Through an individualized approach to nutrition, food allergies among children can prevent.

Keywords: diet, nutrition, protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamin, allergy, energy.

Rational nutrition for children in preschool institutions plays a key role in their physical and mental development. It should be balanced, diverse, and meet all the body's needs for energy, vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial nutrients. The main principles of rational nutrition for children in kindergartens emphasize balance. The diet should include foods rich in proteins, fats, carbohydrates, as well as vitamins and minerals. It is important to observe the proportions of these components based on the child's age.

For 3-year-old children, it is crucial to maintain the correct proportions of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates in the diet to ensure optimal growth and development. The recommended ratio of macronutrients for this age is approximately 15% of the total daily calorie intake from proteins. Sources of proteins include meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, and legumes. Fats should make up about 30-35% of the total diet. About 10% of the fats should saturate, while the rest should be unsaturated (for example, from vegetable oils, fish, and avocados). Carbohydrates should make up about 50-55%, with a focus on complex carbohydrates (such as cereals, whole grain bread, vegetables). Simple carbohydrates (sweets, sugar) should minimize.

This balance helps maintain the child's energy equilibrium, providing the necessary energy for activity and growth, while also contributing to the proper development of the brain and immune system. With balanced nutrition, children should drink enough water—around 1-1.2 liters per day.

The diet for children aged 4-5 should also be balanced, nutritious, and meet the age-specific needs of their bodies. At this age, children are actively growing and developing, requiring a variety of nutrients to support their physical activity and cognitive development.

Sample Menu for a Day for Children Aged 4-5 Years:

1. Breakfast:

Porridge (oatmeal, buckwheat, or rice) with butter — about 150-200 g

Cottage cheese or boiled egg — 50-70 g

Bread with butter — 15-20 g

Tea or compote (without sugar) — 150 ml

2. Second Breakfast (Snack):

Fruit (apple, pear, banana) — 100-150 g

Fermented milk drink (kefir, yogurt) — 150 ml

3. Lunch:

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Soup (vegetable or light meat broth) — 150-200 ml

Meat dish (steamed cutlets, chicken fillet) — 50-70 g

Side dish (mashed potatoes, stewed vegetables, or buckwheat) — 100 g

Fresh salad — 50-70 g

Compote or jelly — 150 ml

4. Afternoon (Snack):

Pastry (bun, crackers) or cookies — 50 g

Fruit puree or fresh berries — 100-150 g

Tea, compote, or fermented milk drink — 150 ml

5. Dinner:

Stewed vegetables with fish or meat — 100-150 g

Cottage cheese or yogurt — 50 g

Bread — 15 g

Tea or herbal drink — 150 ml

Another important requirement for a child's diet is variety, ensuring they receive all the necessary nutrients. To achieve this, different types of foods such as meat, fish, dairy products, grains, vegetables, and fruits are included. Additionally, a structured eating schedule must be followed. In preschools, children typically have four meals (breakfast, second breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack).

The diet must comply with sanitary requirements. High standards of hygiene are crucial when preparing and serving food. Products should be fresh, stored properly, and cooked thoroughly to prevent foodborne illnesses. The diet should also align with the child's age-specific needs, taking into account their requirements for energy and proteins, which are essential for growth and development.

The recommended diet should help prevent allergies and chronic diseases. It is necessary to consider individual characteristics of the children, such as allergies or food intolerances. It is also important to limit sugar and salt content. Rational nutrition in preschool institutions not only promotes proper physical development but also enhances cognitive abilities, which is particularly important during the active period of learning and socialization.

The diet must consider the individual characteristics of each child, including possible allergies or food intolerances. Individual traits significantly affect the organization of their nutrition. Key aspects such as health, age, physical activity, the presence of allergies, food intolerances, and other physiological features should take into account. Proper nutrition tailored to these individual characteristics supports harmonious development and helps prevent health issues.

The main individual factors affecting a child's nutrition are age and developmental stages. Children's nutritional needs change at different ages. For younger children, foods rich in calcium and protein are essential for bone growth, while for preschoolers, carbohydrates and vitamins are important to support their activity and brain development. Active children require more calories and carbohydrates to maintain their high energy levels. Their diet should include carbohydrates such as whole grains and vegetables.

Some children may have allergies to certain foods (e.g., dairy, eggs, nuts, or gluten). In such cases, it is important to exclude allergens from their diet and provide suitable substitutes to maintain a balanced nutrient intake. For instance, plant-based alternatives (almond, oat, or soymilk) can replace dairy, and gluten-free options (buckwheat, rice, corn products) can be used for children with gluten intolerance.



Children with sensitive digestion may not tolerate heavy or fatty foods well. In such cases, a light diet recommended, using steamed or boiled foods, lean meats and fish, as well as vegetable purees. For conditions like diabetes, it is crucial control sugar and fat intake, and the diet should with a healthcare provider.

For gastrointestinal conditions (e.g., gastritis, colitis), food should be gentle, minimizing coarse fiber and spices. Children with low body weight need high-calorie yet balanced meals with increased amounts of protein and fat. For children with excess body weight, it is important to limit high-calorie foods, including sweets, and to include more vegetables and protein-rich products.

Each child may have its own food preferences. It is important to offer a variety of foods to ensure the child gets all the necessary nutrients, even if they dislike certain ones. Sometimes this requires a creative approach, such as incorporating vegetables into dishes that the child is more likely to eat (like casseroles, soups, or smoothies). Adapting the diet to individual needs is key. Providing a choice of several healthy options can meet both the child's preferences and nutritional needs.

In complex cases (e.g., allergies, chronic diseases), consulting a pediatrician or dietitian is important for developing a personalized nutrition plan. Monitoring the body's response to foods is essential, allowing adjustments to be made as needed.

Thus, rational nutrition with an individualized approach ensures the child's health, improves their well-being, and stimulates harmonious development.

References

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