

## Sample Day of Meals for a 6-Year-Old Child

What's for dinner? And breakfast, lunch, and snack... Wondering what your school-aged child should be eating? Below is a sample day of meals, along with tips on feeding your healthy, happy, 6-year old. Your child probably has pretty established food preferences by now, but children's tastes can continue to evolve—you never know when an avid broccoli hater may start demanding it for dinner! The key is to offer a variety of healthy foods consistently.

You know that childhood obesity is a big problem in this country, but there's also lots of research on what works to curb obesity and overweight in children. Eating fruits and vegetables every day and choosing milk or water over soda are the two biggest dietary habits linked to a lower risk of childhood obesity. Getting enough physical activity—at least 60 minutes a day for kids and parents—is another key to a healthy weight. However, it's important to keep the focus on enjoying fruits, vegetables, and physical activity for their own sake, not to stay a healthy weight. So make sure you model good attitudes toward food and fitness.

### Here are some other tips for feeding your 6-year old:

- Now that your child is running off to school in the morning, it's especially important to make time for breakfast. A good breakfast fuels their day and helps them focus at school and is linked to a healthier body weight.
- Turning off the television not only gets rid of distractions at family meals, but also encourages your kids to play in a more physical way. Children this age should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day—playing tag, having a play room dance party, and playing on a jungle gym are all fun ways to get moving. [Getting your kids active](#) can be fun for the whole family!
- Have children participate in making meals: have them set the table, peeling carrots and potatoes, measure liquids. Try making [easy recipes with your little chef](#).
- At the age of 5 children become like adults in that they eat more when served more. Serve smaller portions and give children second helpings when they ask for it.
- Boys start having higher energy needs than girls around 4; you'll see an extra serving each of vegetables, meat/beans, and grains for boys, but use your child's appetite as a guide and, again, get them moving! Read more common sense tips on [parenting food at meal time](#).

Children of this age can really get into the “eat the rainbow” idea. Challenge them to eat some fruit or vegetable from every color each day—white, yellow, orange, red, purple, and green. Here are fun [activities](#) with foods of different colors.

### Sample Day of Meals for a 6-year Old:

Breakfast	1 c. whole grain cereal*	2 oz. whole grains
	½ c. skim or lowfat milk	½ c. dairy
	½ banana	½ c. fruit

Snack	1 large celery stick with 1 T. light cream cheese or almond butter and 1 T. raisins	¼ c. vegetables ½ oz. meat/beans ¼ c. fruit
Lunch	1 c. skim milk Whole wheat pita with 1 thick slice (2 oz.) roasted chicken, ¼ avocado, 5 slices cucumber, and 1 leaf lettuce, and honey-mustard 1 medium orange	1 c. dairy 2 oz. whole grains 2 oz. roast chicken ¾ c. vegetables ¾ c. fruit
Snack	½ c. sliced apple and ½ c. cinnamon-sprinkled plain yogurt	½ c. fruit ½ c. dairy
Dinner	½ baked sweet potato ½ c. broccoli—raw with low fat salad dressing or steamed with 1 T. grated parmesan cheese 2 oz. herb-marinated grilled lean steak** or tempeh 1 whole wheat roll	1 c. vegetables 2 oz. meat/beans 1 oz. whole grains

\* Always look for “100% whole grains” rather than “made with whole grains,” which can have mostly refined grains in them.

\*\* When serving red meat or other sources of iron (leafy greens, tofu, beans), pair it with a food high in vitamin C, like sweet potatoes or tomatoes—it helps your body take in the iron.