



Part 1 Online version



## Part 1

# Principles of Healthy Eating

- I. Recommended food intake
- II. Choices for different food groups
- III. "3 less" cooking

## I. Recommended food intake

Early childhood is an important period for growth and development. With a balanced diet, children can stay healthy and develop good dietary habits, thus laying a solid foundation for their future health.

When providing food for them, parents should consider whether the “quality” and “quantity” of food can meet the development needs of children. The “Healthy Eating Food Pyramid”(Figure 1) is a useful guide for this purpose!

Figure 1 Healthy Eating Food Pyramid



### 1. “Serving” and “quantity”

The term “serving” is a unit used in nutritional science. It describes the amount of food one needs from each food group every day.

The definition of a “serving” of food varies among different food groups, e.g. 1 serving of dairy products is about 1 glass (240 ml) of low-fat milk and 1 serving of fruit is about 1 piece of medium-sized apple. Please refer to Table 1, Table 2 and “Food Exchange List” poster for details.

Once you know the child’s daily serving requirements for each food group, you can work out the “quantity” of different food they should have every day. For example, N to K1 children should have 8 - 12 servings of grains every day, i.e. about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  -  $2\frac{1}{2}$  bowls of rice (1 bowl = 5 tablespoons) or 4 - 6 slices of crustless bread.



Food Exchange List (poster)

Table 1 Recommended daily food intake for children

Food group	Daily intake		Examples of one serving
	N to K1	K2 to K3	
Grains	8 - 12 servings	12 - 15 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{5}</math> bowl or 1 tablespoon of white rice</li> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{3}</math> bowl of macaroni (cooked)</li> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> slice of crustless bread</li> <li>• 1 small-sized potato</li> </ul>
Vegetables	At least 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ servings	At least 2 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> bowl of cooked vegetables</li> <li>• 1 bowl of uncooked vegetables</li> </ul>
Fruits	At least 1 serving	At least 2 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 pieces of small-sized fruit (e.g. kiwi fruit, plum)</li> <li>• 1 piece of medium-sized fruit (e.g. orange, apple)</li> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> piece of large-sized fruit (e.g. banana, grapefruit)</li> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> bowl of cut-up fruit or mini-sized fruit (e.g. watermelon, grapes)</li> <li>• 1 tablespoon of dried fruits</li> <li>• <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> glass (approx. 180ml) of pure fruit juice*</li> </ul>
Dairy products	Approx. 2 servings	Approx. 2 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 glass of low-fat milk</li> <li>• 1 glass of calcium-fortified, low-sugar soymilk</li> <li>• 2 slices of low-fat cheese (approx. 20g per slice)</li> <li>• <math>\frac{2}{3}</math> cup (approx. 150ml) of low-fat yoghurt</li> </ul>
Meat, fish, egg and alternatives	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 servings	2 - 3 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30g of cooked beef, pork, chicken and fish (size of a table tennis ball)</li> <li>• 1 medium-sized egg (approx. 50g)</li> <li>• 1 piece of silky tofu</li> <li>• <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> bowl of dry beans</li> </ul>
Fat & oil (recommended amount of oil used for cooking)	Max. 6 servings	Max. 6 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil</li> <li>• 2 teaspoons of peanut butter</li> <li>• 1 tablespoon of salad dressing</li> </ul>

\* $\frac{3}{4}$  glass (approx. 180ml) or more of pure fruit juice a day would only count as 1 serving of fruit.

Table 2 Unit conversion table

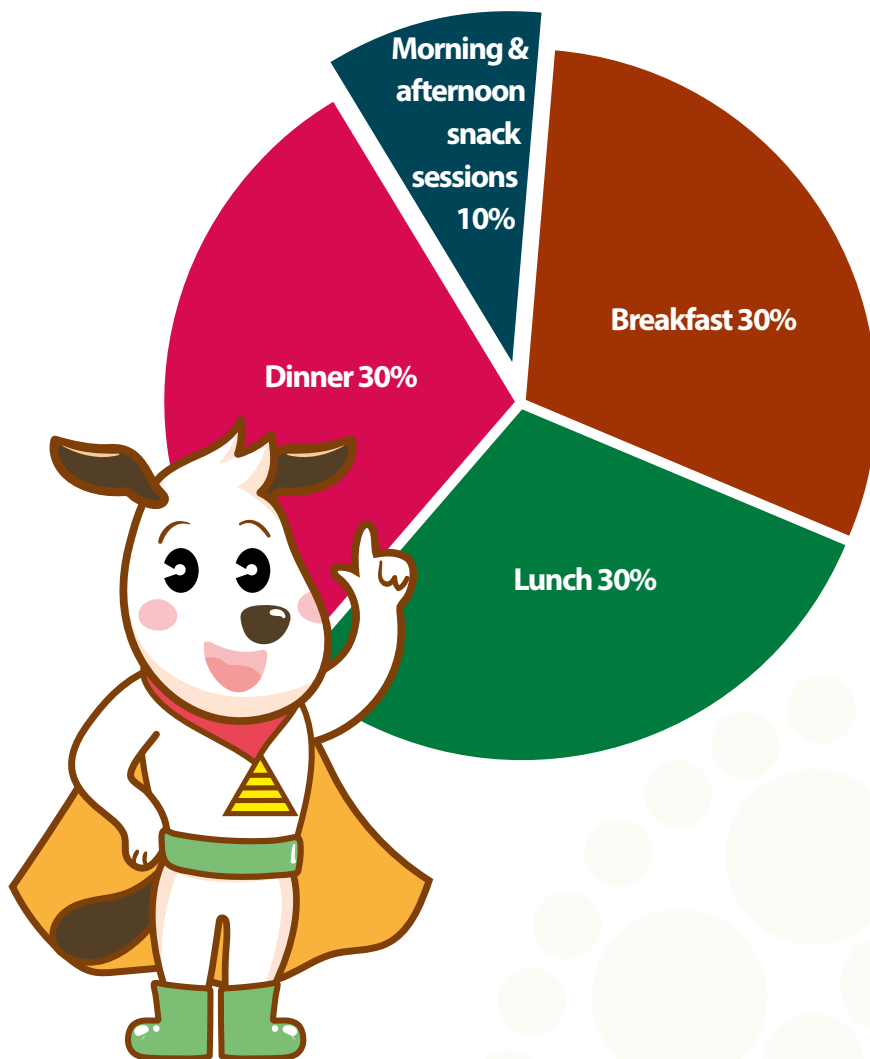
1. Weight			
1 oz	≈	30 g	
1 lb	=	454 g	
1 kg	=	2.2 lb	≈ 35 oz
1 catty	=	16 taels	≈ 640 g
1 tael	≈	40 g	
2. Volume			
1 teaspoon	≈	5 ml	
1 tablespoon	≈	15 ml	
1 glass	≈	240 ml	
1 bowl	=	250 - 300 ml	
1 oz	≈	30 ml	≈ $\frac{1}{8}$ glass
1 L	=	1000 ml	



## 2. Recommended ratio of energy and nutrients in each daily meal

Each main meal (i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner) should provide children with about 30% of their daily energy and nutritional needs, while the remaining 10% should be provided in snack sessions (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Ratio of energy and nutrients in each daily meal

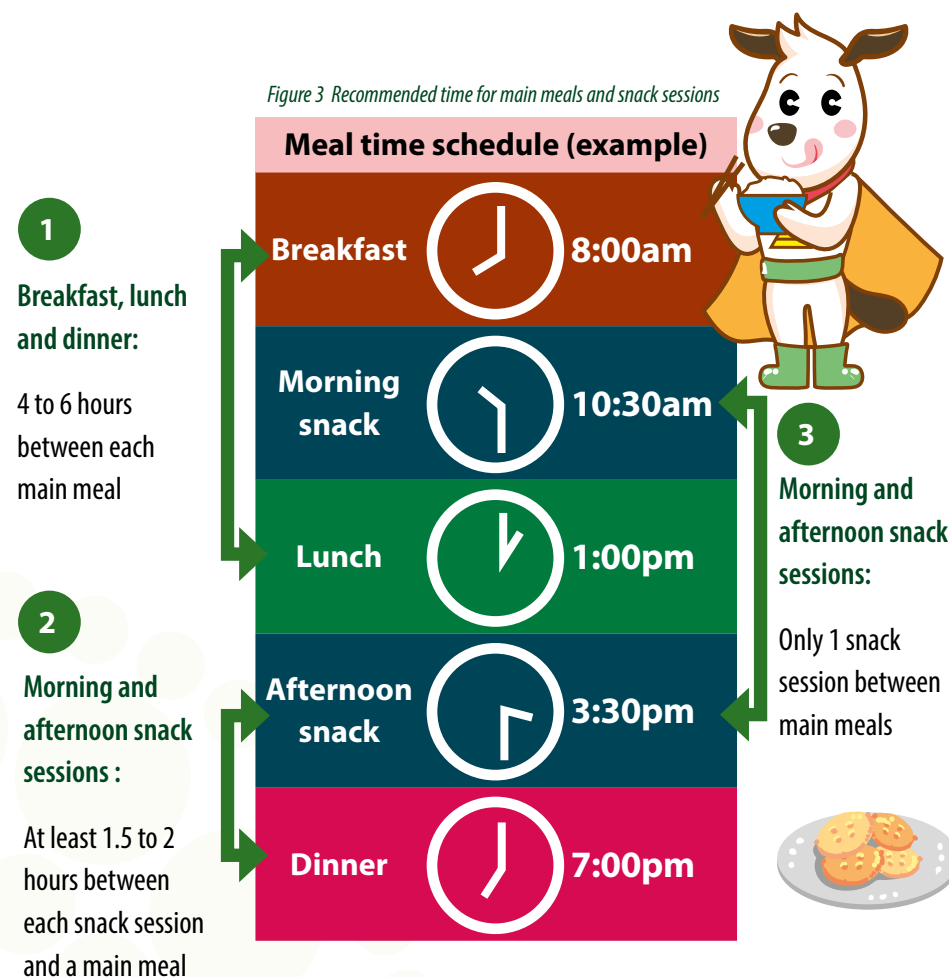


## 3. Recommended meal time throughout the day

The frequency of eating should be appropriate. Eating too infrequently will reduce the children's intake of energy and nutrients and affect their growth. Eating too frequently may lead to excessive food and energy intake, contributing to obesity and increasing the risk of tooth decay.

Please refer to the recommendations ①, ② and ③ in Figure 3 when scheduling meal time for children.

Figure 3 Recommended time for main meals and snack sessions





## II. Choices for different food groups

Apart from quantity and timing of meals, the nutritional value of food also directly affects the health of children. Therefore, please note the following when making food choices:

### Choose



- ✓ Food that is "3 low 1 high" (i.e. low-fat, low-sodium (salt), low-sugar and high-dietary fibre)
- ✓ Mainly natural and fresh food
- ✓ Lean meat and skinless poultry

### Avoid



- ✗ Processed food with added fat/oil, salt or sugar (e.g. ready-made meatballs, dim sum, pickled vegetables, canned food, salted fish, salted duck egg, Chinese preserved meat) and sauces
- ✗ Deep-fried food (e.g. fried bean curd stick, fried bean curd puff, fish tofu, fried fish cake, E-fu noodle)
- ✗ Meat with high fat or high cholesterol content (e.g. pork belly, poultry with skin, chicken paws, offal)
- ✗ Drinks with artificial sweeteners (i.e. sugar substitutes) and caffeine (e.g. tea, coffee)

## 1. Grains

### Choose



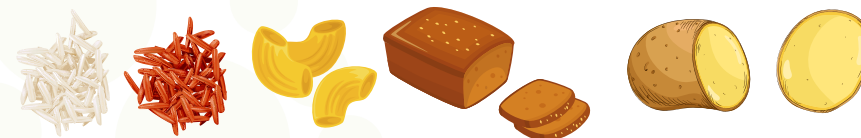
- ✓ Red rice, brown rice, rice with sweet corn, rice with vegetables, white rice
- ✓ Rice vermicelli, macaroni, alphabet pasta, udon, buckwheat noodle
- ✓ Congee, oatmeal
- ✓ Wholemeal bread, multi-grain bread, white bread, dinner roll, raisin bread, steamed bun
- ✓ Potato

### Avoid



- ✗ Fried rice
- ✗ Stir-fried noodle, stir-fried udon, stir-fried rice noodle (ho-fan), E-fu noodle, instant noodle, oily noodle (yau mian), cup noodle
- ✗ Puff pastry or stuffed bun (e.g. egg tart, croissant, pineapple bun, barbecued pork bun, custard bun)
- ✗ Cakes, sandwich biscuits, chocolate biscuits
- ✗ French fries, deep-fried wheat dough stick, French toast

These are high-fat and high-energy foods as a lot of fat/oil is added during the manufacturing/cooking process. One croissant has twice the energy and eight times the fat of a slice of wholemeal bread!





## Smart Tips

Although plain biscuits (e.g. Marie biscuits, animal crackers, soda crackers) contain less fat or sugar than sandwich biscuits, wafers or chocolate biscuits, they contain considerable amounts of trans fat and saturated fat. Eating too much will increase the risk of obesity and chronic diseases, such as heart diseases, hypertension and diabetes. **Parents are recommended to limit the frequency of eating and quantity provided to children.**



## Quiz

- Are cakes or biscuits healthy snack choices? How should I choose healthier cakes and biscuits for young children?



Healthy Tips

## 2. Vegetables and fruit

### Choose



- ✓ Fresh vegetables and fruit (including leafy vegetables, mushrooms, squashes, green peas, whole fruit, cut-up fruit)
- ✓ Frozen and dried vegetables and fruit with no added fat/oil, salt or sugar (e.g. sweet corn kernels, mixed vegetables, dried vegetables, dried fruits)

### Avoid



- ✗ Pickled vegetables and fruit (e.g. preserved mustard root, preserved mustard green, mui choy, pickled Chinese cabbage, salted vegetables, fermented cabbage with garlic, pickled cucumber)
- ✗ Canned vegetables and fruit with high fat, high sodium or high sugar
- ✗ Frozen and dried vegetables and fruit with added fat/oil, salt or sugar (e.g. salted and deep-fried seaweed, dried tomato or raisin with added sugar)
- ✗ Vegetable and fruit juice with added salt or sugar





## Smart Tips

Most processed vegetables and fruit (including pickled and canned food) contain added salt (sodium) and sugar. According to the *Dietary Reference Intakes for Chinese (2013 edition)*, Chinese Nutrition Society, **the daily recommended sodium intake for children aged 4 to 6 should be no more than 1200mg (i.e. the sodium content of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt or 1 tablespoon of soy sauce).**

For example, the sodium content of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of canned button mushroom already constitutes 30% of the daily recommended sodium intake for a child. Blanching can only reduce a small amount of sodium content in canned vegetables. Canned peaches have twice the sugar and energy of the fresh ones. Fresh vegetables and fruit are better choice!



## Quiz

- My kids do not like to eat vegetables. What should I do? Should I replace vegetables with fruit?
- Is organic food healthier and more nutritious?



Healthy Tips

## 3. Meat, fish, egg and alternatives

### Choose



- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Fresh lean meat (e.g. pork, beef) | ✓ Eggs   |
| ✓ Skinless poultry                  | ✓ Dry beans (e.g. soybean, kidney bean, chickpea)  |
| ✓ Fresh and frozen meat and fish    | ✓ Non deep-fried soy products with no added salt (e.g. bean curd, fresh bean curd sheet) |
| ✓ Dried fish with no added salt     | ✓ Dry-roasted plain nuts (e.g. almond, cashew nut)                                       |
| ✓ Canned tuna in spring water       |  |

### Avoid



- ✗ Processed meat or most canned meat (e.g. ham, bacon, sausage, barbecued pork, Chinese preserved sausage, luncheon meat, corned beef, Sichuan pork)
- ✗ Ready-made meatballs or food (e.g. fish ball, beef ball, pork ball, siu-mai, dumplings)
- ✗ Poultry with skin or fatty cuts of meat (e.g. chicken wings and paws, beef brisket, pork jowl, ribs, pork bone, offal)
- ✗ Canned tuna in oil
- ✗ Preserved food (e.g. lime-preserved egg, salted duck egg, salted fish)
- ✗ Soy products with added fat/oil, salt, or sugar (e.g. soy chicken, textured vegetable protein)
- ✗ Deep-fried food (e.g. vegetarian goose, fried bean curd puff, fried bean curd stick, fried fish cakes)
- ✗ Roasted nuts with added salt



## Smart Tips

Most processed meat or meat products are cured or seasoned with fat/oil, salt or sugar. It is difficult to estimate how much and what has been added. Children will take in excessive amounts of fat/oil, salt or sugar unintentionally when they frequently consume these products!

Besides, parents should be cautious that children of a younger age may choke on nuts.



## Quiz

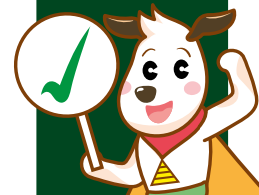
- My kids refuse to eat meat. What should I do?
- What is the function of iron? How to prevent iron deficiency anaemia?
- Can my kids eat eggs every day?
- Is it necessary for young children to eat more meat, fish, eggs and other high-protein foods for growth?



Healthy Tips

## 4. Dairy products

### Choose



- ✓ Low-fat or skimmed milk (original flavour)
- ✓ Low-fat cheese
- ✓ Low-fat plain yoghurt
- ✓ Calcium-fortified, low-sugar soymilk

### Avoid



- ✗ Full-fat milk, evaporated milk, condensed milk
- ✗ Chocolate milk, fruit-flavoured milk (e.g. strawberry milk, papaya milk)
- ✗ Full-fat cheese
- ✗ Full-fat yoghurt





## Smart Tips

The main difference between full-fat milk and low-fat or skimmed milk lies in their fat content; the content of other nutrients like calcium and protein is similar. Generally speaking, **children aged between 2 and 5 may choose low-fat dairy products while those aged 5 or above may choose skimmed ones.**

Low-fat milk and skimmed milk help children take in an adequate amount of calcium and also prevent excessive intake of energy and saturated fat. This is good for the development of bone and teeth as well as promoting heart health!



## Quiz

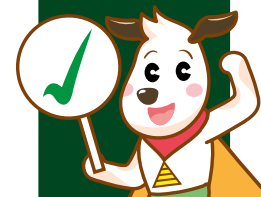
- Is "long-boiled" pork bone soup rich in calcium? Does it promote children's bone development?
- My kid has lactose intolerance. What should I do?



Healthy Tips

## 5. Fats and oils

### Choose



- ✓ Vegetable oils (e.g. olive oil, canola oil, corn oil, soybean oil, peanut oil)
- ✓ Margarine, peanut butter or salad dressings with no trans fat

### Avoid



- ✗ Animal fats (e.g. butter, lard, chicken grease, cream)
- ✗ Vegetable oils with high saturated fat (e.g. coconut cream, coconut oil, palm oil)
- ✗ Margarine or peanut butter with trans fat





## Smart Tips

Most animal fats (e.g. butter, lard, cream) and some vegetable oils (e.g. coconut oil, palm oil) are relatively high in saturated fat, while hydrogenated vegetable oil (e.g. margarine) contains trans fat. Both kinds of fat are bad for heart health!

We should not use an excessive amount of vegetable oil even though it is healthier. Remember **each person should not use more than 6 teaspoons of oil for cooking a day!**



## Quiz

- Which cooking oils are healthier than others?
- Are fats good or bad? What is the recommended daily fat intake for young children?



Healthy Tips

## 6. Seasonings

### Choose



- ✓ Natural ingredients, spices or herbs (e.g. onion, mushroom, tomato, orange, lemon, spring onion, garlic, tangerine peel, turmeric, parsley, cinnamon leaf)
- ✓ Tomato paste

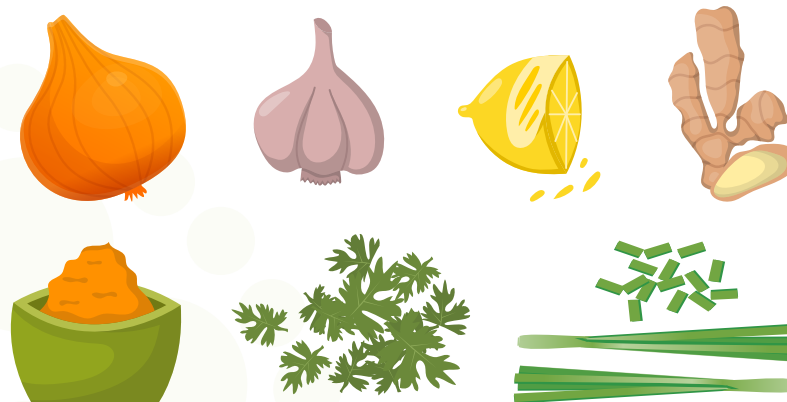
### Avoid



- ✗ High-sodium seasonings (e.g. monosodium glutamate, fish sauce, fermented bean curd, red fermented bean curd)
- ✗ Sauces made with canned soup (e.g. mushroom white sauce, cream corn sauce)
- ✗ Ready-made sauces (e.g. seafood sauce, fermented bean sauce, white sauce, ketchup)



**We should limit the use of some commonly used seasonings, e.g. soy sauce and oyster sauce, due to their relatively high sodium content.**





## Smart Tips

Some people like to make sauce with canned soup. However, the sodium content of most canned soups is relatively high. Frequent consumption of these soups will increase the risk of hypertension!

Fresh vegetables such as pumpkin, tomato, spinach and sweet peppers can be used to make yummy and healthy sauces. Please visit the “[Recipe Sharing Platform](#)” (Chinese version only) on the thematic website of the “StartSmart@school.hk” Campaign, where you can find many healthy recipes that feature natural ingredients and herbs. Some examples are braised fish fillet with tomato and kidney beans, cauliflower with crushed garlic, chicken fillet with tomato and onion, and stir-fried meat with organic tomato and green bell pepper. Give these healthy dishes a try!



Recipe Sharing Platform (Chinese version only)



## Quiz

- Is chicken powder healthier than salt? Should salt be replaced with chicken powder when I cook for young children?



Healthy Tips

## III. “3 less” cooking

You can prepare yummy “3 less” dishes by limiting the use of oil, salt, sugar or choosing seasonings with less fat/oil, salt or sugar during the cooking process!

### Less oil

- Limit the use of oil when cooking. **Each person is recommended not to use more than 6 teaspoons of oil for cooking a day.**
- Use low-fat cooking methods, such as steaming, boiling, baking, grilling, stir-frying or pan-frying with little amount of oil.
- Remove skin and visible fat from meat before cooking.
- Use an oil sprayer or an oil container with a smaller opening to control the amount of cooking oil used when cooking.





## Less salt

- Use as little salt as possible. Use a smaller spoon to reduce the amount of salt used.



**The daily recommended sodium intake for children aged 4 to 6 should be no more than 1200mg (i.e. the sodium content of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of salt or 1 tablespoon of soy sauce).**

- Avoid using monosodium glutamate, chicken powder, ready-made sauces or high-sodium seasonings, e.g. fermented bean curd, red fermented bean curd, seafood sauce, shrimp paste, teriyaki sauce, ketchup, sauces made with canned soup.
- Use natural ingredients, spices or herbs for seasoning, e.g. onion, tomato, mushroom, lemon, orange, ginger, spring onion, garlic, pepper, parsley, cinnamon leaf.
- Use fresh vegetables or fruit for homemade sauce, e.g. tomato sauce, sweet pepper sauce, spinach sauce, pumpkin sauce.
- Use fresh fruit in cooked dishes, e.g. stir-fried meat with dragon fruit, steamed meat patty with apple cubes, stir-fried chicken fillet with fresh pineapple.
- Serve sauce and main dish or grains separately if possible, e.g. oyster sauce or soy sauce for boiled vegetable; white sauce or gravy for spaghetti. Add sauce only bit by bit to the main dish or grains when served.



## Less sugar

- Use less sugar for seasoning, cooking or making homemade sweet soup. Use a smaller spoon to reduce the amount of sugar used.
- The World Health Organization recommends that children's **sugar intake should not exceed 10% of their total energy intake per day.**
- Check whether an ingredient contains sugar (e.g. apple, pear, papaya, dates, raisins) to determine whether extra sugar is needed.



**Take a 4-year-old boy who consumes 1300kcal per day as an example. His sugar intake should be less than 32.5g (about 6.5 teaspoons).**



If you need some ideas for cooking, you can browse the **“Recipe Sharing Platform”** (Chinese version only) on the thematic website of the “StartSmart@school.hk” Campaign, where you can find many healthy recipes. These ingenious recipes are devised by staff or parents from kindergartens and child care centres and contain dietitians’ tips to give you a better understanding of the nutritional information.



Less Salt for Health  
(infographic factsheet)



Less Sugar for Health  
(infographic factsheet)



Recipe Sharing Platform  
(Chinese version only)



Seasonal Menu



Festive Menu



Part 2 Online version



## Part 2

### Tipson Healthy Eating

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| I. Increase intake of vegetables and fruit | V. Eating out                  |
| II. Healthy drinks                         | VI. Celebrations               |
| III. Healthy snacks and nutrition label    | VII. Family education          |
| IV. Food reward                            | VIII. Home-school co-operation |