

# FACT SHEET:



# ABIOS

Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service

**Category:**  
Life After ABI  
Parenting

**Audience:**  
Person with an ABI

For more information  
contact the Acquired Brain  
Injury Outreach Service  
(ABIOS)

PH: (07) 3176 9506

Email: [abios@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:abios@health.qld.gov.au)

Address: PO Box 6053, Buranda 4102

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ABIOS Manager

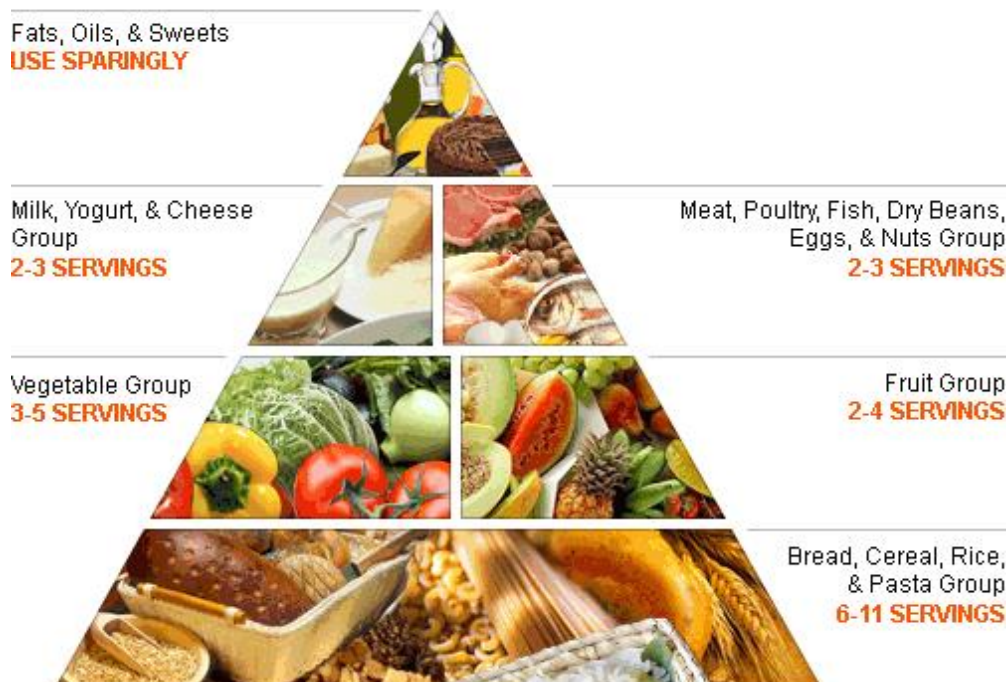


## Healthy Eating

### Introduction

A balanced and healthy diet is directly related to a child's growth, their behaviour and their ability to concentrate and therefore learn. If a child is provided with nutritious and regular meals they will be happier, they will be able to attend to activities and tasks for longer and their behaviour may be more manageable.

Following the Healthy Food Pyramid can be a good way to plan meals for the week. Ensure you and your children eat two serves of fruit per day and five serves of vegetables per day. Minimise the amount of sugar, butter, margarine, oil and salt that is eaten. Remember you are the best role model for your children, particularly when it comes to healthy eating.



### Healthy Food Pyramid

(Reference for this image: <http://www.weight-loss-program.com/art05-pyramid.html>)

Children’s meal requirements will change as they get older. However, there are a number of Key Points that are important to remember at any age:

## Key Points

- Milk is important for children as it contains calcium. Calcium is important for healthy bones. Under 12 months of age, children should mainly be having breast milk or infant formula. Over 12 months of age full-cream milk can be provided. For toddlers and older children only about 3 drinks of milk (3 serves of dairy products) per day is required to meet calcium needs so therefore water should be encouraged at all other times.
- Avoid fruit juices. It is better for a child to eat a piece of fruit rather than drink fruit juice. Fruit juice may be filled with some vitamins but they are also high in sugar and low in fibre.
- Encourage your child to eat more fruit and vegetables. Keep offering fruit and vegetables in a variety of ways.
- Remember that children’s tastes do change with age. It might help to involve your child in planning and preparing the food, or being a bit creative about the way that food is presented on the plate. Make eating healthy food enjoyable by having a variety of fruits and vegetables and cooking them in different ways.






- Preparing meals together with your children is a great opportunity to teach them about the benefits of healthy eating e.g. “pasta gives you lots of energy”
- Variety of food is important. When choosing fruit and vegetables, select different colours. To keep the costs low choose the fruits and vegetables that are in season. You can also use frozen and tinned varieties.



- After 12 months of age children can eat most foods. Therefore children should be offered a variety of different foods, flavours and textures for balanced nutrition. Children will learn to eat what the family eats if they are presented with the same options and encouraged to try it.
- Low fat or restricted diets are generally not recommended for children as they may result in poor growth. (An exception would be if it is suggested by your doctor.)
- Always introduce new foods with familiar foods
- Allow your child some likes and dislikes
- Provide appropriate cutlery and make sure your child is sitting down when eating
- Reduce unnecessary distractions at mealtimes– turn off the television and talk together instead
- Start with a small serving of food and then give more if your child is still hungry
- If a food is refused make your child sit quietly until everyone else is finished
- Treats are best kept for special occasions
- Highly processed, sugary, fatty and salty foods should only make up a very small part of your child’s diet



## Healthy Snack Suggestions:

Age	Healthy Snack
Early toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lightly steamed vegetable sticks</li> </ul>
Older toddlers	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh and dried fruits</li> <li>Biscuits with cheese/ vegemite/ peanut butter (mindful of allergy)</li> <li>Yoghurt</li> <li>Plain biscuits or scones</li> <li>Dips with biscuits or steamed vegetable sticks/ grated vegetables</li> </ul>
Pre-schoolers	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh fruit or fruit in juice (fruit cups)</li> <li>Yoghurt or cheese (low fat dairy products may be offered)</li> <li>Fruit bread, bun or muffin</li> <li>Bread, rice cakes or biscuits with spreads</li> <li>Vegetable pieces and dips</li> </ul>
Primary schoolers	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandwiches or pita bread with cheese, lean meat, hummus or peanut butter and salad</li> <li>Cheese slices, biscuits with spread</li> <li>Washed and cut up raw vegetables or fresh fruits</li> <li>Frozen water bottle or tetra pack of milk</li> </ul>

## References

Information taken from:

- [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

Healthy Eating Pyramid Picture courtesy of:  
<http://www.weight-loss-program.com/art05-pyramid.html>

## Resources

See other Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS) Information sheets at  
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/>

## Acknowledgement:

*We acknowledge that in the development of the ABIOS Parenting fact sheets we have incorporated ideas from the 1-2-3 Magic Program and The Triple P program*

## Notes:

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