## Portions for Preschoolers

At child care, the amount of food served at meals and snacks depends on the age of the child. A reasonable portion for preschoolers is smaller than for teens or adults.

The chart below shows how portions compare for adults and preschoolers. It may not look like a lot, but the amounts shown below are just right for preschoolers' small stomachs and energy needs.

## Examples of Portions for Adults and Preschoolers

|  | Preschooler | Adult |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Breakfast | $1 / 2$ cup breakfast cereal flakes <br> $1 / 2$ cup sliced strawberries <br> $3 / 4$ cup low-fat (1\%) milk | 1 cup breakfast cereal flakes 1 slice of whole-wheat bread $1 / 2$ cup sliced strawberries 1 cup low-fat (1\%) milk |
| Dinner | $11 / 2$ ounces oven-baked chicken <br> $1 / 4$ cup baked sweet potatoes <br> $1 / 4$ cup cooked brown rice <br> $1 / 4$ cup fruit salad <br> $3 / 4$ cup low-fat (1\%) milk | 2 ounces oven-baked chicken <br> $1 / 2$ cup baked sweet potatoes <br> $1 / 2$ cup cooked brown rice <br> $1 / 2$ cup fruit salad <br> 1 dinner roll <br> 1 cup low-fat (1\%) milk |

## Teaching Healthy Eating Habits

Offer preschool-sized portions, not adult portions. This helps your child learn to pay attention to whether he or she feels hungry or full. Smaller amounts help your child only eat what his or her body needs. If your child is still hungry, he or she will ask for more. When your child is served smaller amounts, less food is wasted.

## Helpful tips for feeding your preschooler:

- Use smaller bowls, plates, and cups for smaller portions.
- Let your child practice serving himself or herself smaller portions.
- Do not force your child to finish everything on his or her plate.


## Sample portion sizes by types of foods

At home, you can use the chart below as a general guide for the amount of a particular food to serve at meals. See the front page of this handout for information on how foods might be served together to make a meal. Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these portion amounts; other days they may want more.

