



COORDINATED APPROACH TO CHILD HEALTH (CATCH) GO–SLOW–WHOA List

Introduction

The **CATCH GO–SLOW–WHOA List** is a tool to guide children and families toward making healthful food choices. The overall message is that all foods can fit into a healthful diet, which consists of more **GO** foods than **SLOW** foods, and more **SLOW** foods than **WHOA** foods.

GO > SLOW > WHOA

Foods are divided into seven sections, five of which are food groups (Vegetables; Fruits; Grains; Milk and Dairy Foods; Meat, Beans, and Eggs). The other two sections are Fats and Other.

GO foods: Examples include fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods, and unsweetened 1% milk. **GO** foods are commonly described as “whole foods,” meaning that they’re generally the least processed compared to foods in the same food group/section. These foods are also lowest in salt (sodium) and/or added sugars. In addition, **GO** foods are lowest in unhealthy fats—that is, solid fats such as butter or lard, as opposed to healthy fats, which are vegetable oils.

WHOA foods: Examples include candy, cookies, chips, fried foods, ice cream, soft drinks, and sugary cereals. **WHOA** foods are generally the most processed and are highest in unhealthy fats, added sugars, and/or salt.

SLOW foods are in between **GO** foods and **WHOA** foods. Examples include sweetened (including flavored) 1% milk, refined-grain foods, and fruit with added sugar.

To determine whether a food is **GO**, **SLOW**, or **WHOA**, it’s compared to all the other foods in its category (row) of the food group/section. Although foods are categorized in this way, it’s important to note that eating large quantities of foods can be unhealthy, even if they’re **GO** foods.

The **GO–SLOW–WHOA List** doesn’t contain combination foods such as sandwiches or pizzas since each ingredient is either a **GO**, **SLOW**, or **WHOA** food. For instance, a pizza is made up of a crust, sauce, cheese, and toppings. These ingredients belong in more than one food group. To determine if the pizza is a **GO**, **SLOW**, or **WHOA** pizza, you should take all the ingredients into consideration.

The most healthful type of meal includes mostly GO foods. Here are two examples of healthful meals.

GO Breakfast

Oatmeal without added sugar (GO)
Brown sugar (WHOA)
Fresh blueberries (GO)
1% milk (GO)

GO Lunch

Turkey sandwich
Whole-wheat bread (GO)
Low-fat turkey (GO)
Mustard (GO)
American cheese (WHOA)
Tomato (GO)
Lettuce (GO)
Baked potato chips (SLOW)
Canned peaches without added sugar (GO)
Skim milk (GO)

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GRAINS

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Breads/ Muffins/ Sweet Breads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-grain bread, buns, rolls, bagels, tortillas, and pita bread Corn tortillas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White (refined flour) bread, buns, rolls, bagels, tortillas, pita bread Cornbread Muffins, waffles, pancakes, and French toast made with vegetable oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croissants Biscuits Sweet rolls Doughnuts Muffins, waffles, pancakes, and French toast made with solid fats
Pasta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pasta made with whole-grain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pasta made with refined flour Egg noodles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instant higher-fat noodle soups
Rice and Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown rice Wild rice Whole grains (amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, whole cornmeal, millet, oats, quinoa, rye, sorghum, teff, triticale) Whole wheat (spelt, durum, farro [emmer], cracked wheat, wheat berries, bulgur) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White rice Rice cakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried rice
Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-grain, low-sugar cereals (such as toasted oats, shredded wheat, oatmeal, muesli) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-sugar cereals made with refined grains Granola made with vegetable oils Instant oatmeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-sugar cereals made with refined grains Granola made with solid fats
Crackers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat whole-grain crackers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat crackers made with refined grains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-fat crackers
Chips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked tortilla chips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tortilla chips Baked potato chips Pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potato chips Other chips (such as cheese puffs, corn chips)
Cookies/Cake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-grain animal crackers Graham crackers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal crackers made with refined flour Vanilla wafers Cereal/fruit bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cookies Cakes
Popcorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air-popped popcorn with no salt added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn made with vegetable oils and/or salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn made with solid fats Flavored popcorn (such as caramel, cheese) Kettle corn

VEGETABLES

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables with no salt, sugar, or fat added, or with a small amount of salt** added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables made with vegetable oils Vegetables with salt and/or sugar added Baked french fries and hash browns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables made with solid fats Fried battered vegetables Fried potatoes, french fries, fried hash browns
Vegetable Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% low-sodium vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% vegetable juice 	

* Less than 200 mg of sodium (about one pinch of salt) per cup

Examples of vegetables: asparagus, avocado, bean sprouts, beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chayote, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, egg-plant, garlic, green beans, jicama, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, nopalitos, okra, onions, parsnip, peas, peppers (such as bell, jalapeno, poblano, etc.), potatoes, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, spinach, squash, taro root, tomatoes, turnip greens, turnips, yucca (cassava or manioc), zucchini

FRUITS

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, frozen, or canned fruits with no sugar or salt added, or with a small amount of salt** added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits canned in light syrup Fruits with sugar and/or salt added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits canned in heavy syrup
Fruit Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% fruit juice Frozen 100% fruit juice bars and smoothies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sherbet, sorbet Frozen fruit juice bars and smoothies with added sugar 	
Dried Fruit/ Fruit Leather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried fruit (such as raisins, figs, dates, apricots, plums) 100% fruit leather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried fruit with added sugar Fruit leather with added sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit roll-ups

* Less than 200 mg of sodium (about one pinch of salt) per cup

Examples of fruits: apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, cherries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, honeydew melons, kiwi, kumquats, lemons, limes, mangos, nectarines, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple, plums, pomegranate, star fruits, strawberries, tangerines, watermelon



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MEAT, BEANS, AND EGGS

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Dried Beans and Peas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beans (such as pinto, black, red, garbanzo), peas (such as black-eyed, split, purple hull), and lentils – with no salt or fat added, or with a small amount of salt* added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beans, peas, and lentils made with vegetable oils Refried beans Beans, peas, and lentils with salt and/or sugar added Hummus Falafel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beans, peas, and lentils made with solid fats Baked beans, canned Pork and beans, canned
Nuts and Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pumpkin and sunflower seeds with no added salt, sugar, or fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pumpkin and sunflower seeds with added salt, sugar, and/or fat Peanuts, almonds, pecans, walnuts, cashews, and pistachios with no added salt, sugar, or fat Natural peanut butter and other nut butters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peanuts, almonds, pecans, walnuts, and pistachios with added salt, sugar, and/or fat Peanut butter and other nut butters with added salt, sugar, and/or fat
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole eggs Egg whites Egg Substitute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs fried in vegetable oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs fried in solid fats
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish and shellfish – baked, grilled or broiled (such as salmon, catfish, shrimp, crab, lobster) Tuna canned in water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked breaded fish, shellfish, and fish sticks Tuna canned in oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried fish, shellfish, and fish sticks
Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken and turkey without skin (baked, grilled, or broiled) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken and turkey with skin (baked, grilled, or broiled) Breaded baked chicken and turkey Baked chicken nuggets Ground chicken and turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fried chicken Fried chicken nuggets
Beef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean cuts of beef (such as round roast, round steak, sirloin, tenderloin) Extra-lean ground beef Ground beef that has been drained and rinsed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean ground beef Lean or low-fat hamburgers Regular cuts of beef (such as brisket, T-bone, chuck roast) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular ground beef Regular hamburgers Ribs

MILK AND DAIRY FOODS

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free (skim/non-fat) milk 1% (low-fat) milk Fortified soy, almond, and rice milk – unsweetened Non-fat dry milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2% (reduced-fat) milk Flavored fat-free (skim/non-fat) or 1% milk Fortified soy, almond, and rice milk – sweetened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole milk (plain or flavored) Flavored 2% (reduced-fat) milk Milkshakes
Yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free or low-fat plain or 100% fruit juice-sweetened yogurt Fat-free or low-fat yogurt drinks – unsweetened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fat-free or low-fat yogurt – sweetened Fat-free or low-fat yogurt drinks – sweetened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-milk yogurt Whole-milk yogurt drinks
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-skim natural cheese Low-fat string cheese Low-fat (1%) cottage cheese Low-fat soy cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural cheeses (such as Colby, cheddar, Swiss) Cottage cheese (2% or reduced-fat) Ricotta cheese (part-skim) Low-fat cheese sauce Low-fat processed cheese Soy cheese Low-fat cream cheese String cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processed cheese Powdered cheese sauce mix Cream cheese Cheese sauce Ricotta cheese (whole-milk) Cottage cheese (whole-milk)
Sour Cream		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-fat sour cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sour cream
Dairy Desserts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-fat or low-fat frozen yogurt Low-fat ice cream Pudding made with skim or 1% milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice cream Pudding made with 2% or whole milk Cheesecake Frozen yogurt Gelato

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OTHER

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Herbs and Spices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh spices (such as garlic and ginger) Fresh or dried herbs (such as basil, rosemary, cilantro) Seasonings without salt (such as garlic powder or onion powder) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salt Seasonings with salt or sodium Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
Sugars/ Sweeteners/ Candy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced-sugar syrup Artificial sweeteners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugar Brown sugar Chocolate candy Candies Sugar-sweetened gelatin Honey Molasses Syrup Agave nectar
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Sparkling water Unsweetened decaffeinated tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsweetened tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft drinks (regular and diet) Beverages with added sugar Sweetened tea and tea drinks Coffee drinks Sports drinks Fruit-flavored drinks Fruit-juice drinks Vitamin water Energy drinks
Spreads/ Condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mustard Butter flakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jam Jelly Olives Ketchup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pickles

MEAT, BEANS, AND EGGS (cont.)

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Pork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean cuts of pork (such as pork chops or tenderloin – without fat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean ham Canadian bacon Regular cuts of pork (such as pork roast, shoulder, ham) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ribs Bacon Ham hock Pork skins
Other Protein Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tofu Tempeh Venison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Veggie” burger Processed plant-based meat substitutes 	
Processed Meat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luncheon meats (such as chicken, turkey, ham) Low-fat hot dogs Turkey or chicken sausage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot dogs Pepperoni Sausage Beef jerky Bologna Salami Chorizo Pastrami

* Less than 200 mg of sodium (about one pinch of salt) per cup

FATS

	GO	SLOW	WHOA
Fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-stick cooking spray 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables oils (such as olive, canola, peanut, soybean, corn, cottonseed, safflower, or sunflower) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solid fats (such as butter, margarine, shortening, lard, salt pork)
Foods Rich in Fats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravy, sauces, mayonnaise, and salad dressing made with vegetable oils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gravy, mayonnaise, sauces, and salad dressing made with solid fats

Recommended Daily Amounts by Age*

Food Group	Recommended Amount for Children 4–8 Years Old	Recommended Amount for Children 9–13 Years Old
Vegetables	1½ cups	2–2½ cups**
Fruits	1–1½ cups	1½ cups
Grains	4–5 ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent equals: 1 slice bread, 5–7 crackers, ½ cup cooked oatmeal, 1 cup dry cereal, ½ cup cooked rice, 3 cups popped popcorn)	5–6 ounce equivalents***
Milk and Dairy Foods	2 cups (1½ ounces of hard cheese counts as 1 cup of milk)	3 cups
Meat, Beans, and Eggs	3–4 ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent equals: ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 ounce meat, 1 egg)	5 ounce equivalents
Oils	4 teaspoons	5 teaspoons
Other	None	None

* www.ChooseMyPlate.gov
 ** Girls – 2 cups; Boys – 2½ cups
 *** Girls – 5 ounce equivalents; Boys – 6 ounce equivalents