

Balanced Diet for Growing School-Age Kids

Growing 5–10-year-olds need fuel for school, sports, and endless energy! In Pakistani homes, where roti and biryani reign, a balanced diet keeps kids healthy and focused. Here's how to make it happen.

Why a Balanced Diet Matters

Good nutrition supports strong bones, sharp minds, and immunity. Kids need carbs, proteins, fats, and vitamins in the right mix to thrive.

Building a Balanced Plate

- **Carbs (40–50%):** Roti, rice, or paratha for energy. Choose whole grains like brown rice sometimes.
- **Proteins (20–30%):** Eggs, chicken, daal, or fish for growth. Aim for 1–2 servings daily.
- **Veggies (20%):** Carrots, palak, or bhindi for vitamins. Sneak into qeema if they're picky.
- **Fruits (10%):** Mangoes, bananas, or apples for fiber and sweetness.
- **Dairy:** Milk, yogurt, or paneer (400–500 ml daily) for calcium.
- **Healthy fats:** Ghee, nuts, or olive oil in moderation for brain health.

Sample Pakistani Menu

- **Breakfast:** Anda paratha with milk or suji ka halwa.
- **Snack:** Fruit chaat or roasted chana.
- **Lunch:** Chicken qeema with roti, cucumber slices.
- **Snack:** Yogurt with nuts (if no allergies) or a boiled egg.
- **Dinner:** Daal-chawal with palak, apple slices.

Tips for Success

- **Make it colorful:** A rainbow plate (red tomatoes, green peas) ensures variety.
- **Involve them:** Let them pick a veggie at the sabzi mandi or stir daal.
- **Limit sugar:** Save mithai for special days; offer fruit for dessert.
- **Desi hack:** Blend veggies into gravies or add fruit to yogurt for “lassi.”
- **Small portions:** Serve kid-sized amounts (1/2 roti, 1/4 cup daal) to avoid waste.

Pakistani Context

- **Joint families:** Align with Dadi to limit extra rusks or toffees.
- **School tiffins:** Pack roti rolls with qeema or veggie paratha for nutrition on the go.
- **Budget tip:** Use seasonal fruits like guavas or chickpeas for cheap protein.

Challenges

- **Picky eaters:** Retry foods 10–15 times in new forms (e.g., palak in paratha).
- **Dawats:** Let them enjoy biryani but balance with salad or yogurt.
- **Fast food:** Limit burgers to once a week; pair with homemade juice.

When to Worry

If your child skips meals, loses weight, or seems tired, consult a pediatrician for deficiency checks.

A balanced diet fuels your kid's growth and school success. Serve a colorful plate tonight!