

“extras”: Some foods don’t fit into any group. These “extras” may be mainly fats or sugars—limit your intake of these:

- Foods that contain solid fats or added sugars, like sausage, biscuits, sweetened cereals or sour cream.
- Foods that contain only fats or sugars—like candy, soft drinks and chips.
- Use discretion when adding fats or sweeteners to foods—like sauces, salad dressings, sugars, jellies and margarine.

Water: While an important beverage for children to drink each day in response to thirst and for hydration, water does not belong to any food group, nor is it an “extra.”

Popcorn: While many people associate popcorn with snack foods like chips, it is part of the Grains, Breads + Cereals group. Popcorn is, in fact, fairly high in fiber. It is best, however, to eat popcorn plain.

Animal crackers: Despite their name, animal crackers are high in added sugars and belong in the “extras.”

Tomatoes: Even though botanically they are a fruit, tomatoes are classified in the Vegetables group because they are most often eaten with, and prepared like, other vegetables. This is consistent with USDA’s food grouping system.

Pickles: While pickles are made from cucumbers—a vegetable—the processing destroys some of the nutrients. The final product is not rich in nutrients and so becomes an “extra” food.

Avocados: Even though botanically they are a fruit, avocados are classified in the Vegetables group because they are most often eaten with, and prepared like, other vegetables. This is consistent with USDA’s food grouping system.

Lemonade: The high sugar content of lemonade makes it an “extra” food.

Fruit rolls: The high sugar content of fruit rolls makes them an “extra” food. It is always best to eat whole fruits or 100 percent fruit juice.

Pudding: When made with milk, pudding belongs in the Milk + Milk Products food group because of its high calcium content.

Cocoa made with milk: When made with milk, cocoa belongs in the Milk + Milk Products food group because of its high calcium content. This is not the case when it is made with water; then it is classified as an “extra.”

Ice cream, milkshakes: Because of their calcium content, both ice cream and milkshakes are classified in the Milk + Milk Products food group. Lower-fat options are encouraged. This is consistent with USDA’s food grouping system.

Eggs: Many grocery stores have a refrigerated section called “Dairy and Eggs,” but these foods belong to separate food groups. Eggs come from hens, are classified in the Meat, Beans + Nuts group and are a good source of protein.

Beans: Beans such as pinto, lima, split pea and lentil have been placed in two food groups: Meat, Beans + Nuts; and Vegetables. There is justification for this dual placement based on the nutrient profile of beans. However, to simplify the food-classification process for students, we place beans only in the Meat, Beans + Nuts group in this program. This is particularly important for students who may be vegetarians and are consuming beans as a primary protein and iron source.

Bacon, beef jerky: Even though they are derived from meat, both count as “extras.” Bacon primarily provides fat, and beef jerky is high in sodium.

Tea, coffee: These beverages contain no calories and no nutrients. They are considered “extra” foods.