

Feeding Your Toddler

Toddler hood is a period of independence and transition. If your child ate well as a baby and has now become "picky," don't worry! This is normal and is known as "food neophobia" – the fear of new foods. Some toddlers go through "food jags" where they eat one food for days at a time. This is also common, so be patient and continue to offer a variety of nutritious foods. Toddlers eat a lot on some days and a little on others. Therefore, focus on your toddler's weekly intake rather than just one day.

Help your child learn healthy eating habits!

- Offer new foods along with foods they already like.
- Eat together as a family.
- Don't give up! It could take your child up to 10 times (or more) of trying a new food before he/she accepts it.
- Establish set meal and snack times. Toddlers love routine.
- Be a role model and let your child see **YOU** tasting and enjoying new foods!
- Make it fun! Play with new foods and never force your child to eat!
- Serve small portions. Your child can always ask for more.
- Eating is messy, don't stress about the mess! Learning to eat takes practice; let your child try eating independently!
- Do NOT use food for reward or punishment.
- Don't join the "clean the plate club." Let your child eat the amount he or she feels is right.
- Keep mealtime to 20-30 minutes because toddlers can lose attention easily!
- Let your child participate in preparing meals and make healthy foods fun to eat!



FEEDING GUIDELINES

Grains: 3 oz. every day: whole wheat bread, brown rice, pasta, oatmeal or ready-to-eat cereal. At least half your grains should be whole. Search the ingredients list to make sure the first word is "whole" (like "whole wheat").

Vegetables: 1 cup every day: Color your plate with all kinds of great-tasting veggies. Go dark green with broccoli and spinach, or try orange ones like carrots and sweet potatoes.

Fruits: 1 cup every day: Apples, bananas, melons or berries. Canned and dried fruits are great too!

Milk or Dairy (Calcium): 2 cups every day: Low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese help build strong bones!

Meats (Protein): 2 oz. every day: Eat lean or low-fat meats such as turkey, chicken or fish. Tofu, peas and beans are great sources of protein, too!

Fats & Sweets: Limit calories from fats and sweets since these are "empty" calories. You can make your own "sweets" in the form of carrot cookies, dips made from yogurt and fruits.

A good rule for serving sizes for toddlers is 1 tablespoon per year of age.

NUTRIENTS OF CONCERN



Calcium:

- Important for strong bones and teeth!
- Toddlers fill up on milk quickly and lose their appetite for nutrient rich foods
- Remember to **limit milk to 16-20 oz. a day**. This will meet a child's daily calcium needs without ruining his/her appetite
- Too much milk can cause constipation
- Yogurt, tofu and cheese are also great sources of calcium

Iron:

- Excellent sources of iron include lean meats, dried fruits, legumes, green leafy vegetables such as cooked spinach and collards, baked potatoes with the skin, enriched cereal and bread.
- To enhance the absorption of iron, serve with foods high in vitamin C, such as oranges, strawberries, kiwi, tomato sauce and potatoes.
- To make meats easier for your toddler to chew, use ground beef for meatballs or shred chicken and pork.

MEAL/SNACK IDEAS

- Rice mixed with black beans or spinach
- Broccoli with melted cheese
- English muffin pizza
- Scrambled eggs and cheese
- French toast or pancakes topped with fruit
- Cottage cheese or yogurt with fresh fruit



Muffin Tin Meatloaves

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef or turkey
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1 1/2 cups zucchini, shredded
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions:

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. In large bowl, combine all ingredients except ketchup, mixing lightly but thoroughly. Place approximately 1/3 cup beef mixture into each of 12 medium muffin cups, pressing lightly; spread ketchup over tops. Bake 20 minutes or until centers are no longer pink. Remove meatloaves from pan.

www.keepkidshealthy.com

Websites to visit for more information:

Toddler nutrition, recipes & tips for picky eaters

www.wholesometoddlerfood.com

Food guide pyramid for the whole family

www.mypyramid.gov

Pediatric health and nutrition advice

www.keepkidshealthy.com

Online access to government information on food and human nutrition for consumers

www.nutrition.gov

Benefits of fruits & veggies and more...

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.gov