

Food

for young children



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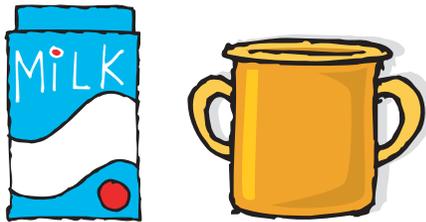
Good eating habits need to start from a young age.

This booklet will give you practical tips and suggestions about food for your child aged 1-5 years. If you are wondering what foods your child should be eating, how to cope with a fussy eater or looking for meal and snack ideas for your child, you will find this information useful.

For ease of reading everywhere we refer to your child we will use the term 'she'.

By the age of one year

- Your child should be eating a variety of foods.
- She should be drinking from a lidless beaker.
- Your child needs 1 pint of full fat milk a day (see page 5 for serving sizes). Drinking more than this can reduce your child's appetite for food.



Remember you are laying the foundation for life-long healthy eating.

THE FOOD PYRAMID



Healthy eating is about having a varied, balanced diet and enjoying lots of different foods. The food pyramid will help you choose a healthy and varied diet for your child.

Remember your child can decide for herself how much food she needs, so don't make her eat until her plate is empty.

Food groups

The following are suggested servings from each of the Food Pyramid shelves. Offer the recommended serving from each Food Pyramid shelf every day.

Bread, cereals and potatoes – Provide energy to help work and play

Recommended servings per day:

- 1-3 years: 4 servings
- 3-5 years: 4-6+ servings

1 Serving = any of the following

- 1 slice of bread or a small bread roll
- 1 small bowl of cereal (eg 30g variety size pack)
- 2 cream crackers
- 1 medium potato
- 3 dessertspoons of boiled rice or pasta

Active children may need more servings from this food group to give them enough energy.



Remember – children's appetites may vary, offer younger children smaller portion sizes.

Fruit & vegetables – Provide vitamins and minerals, essential for good health

Recommended servings per day:

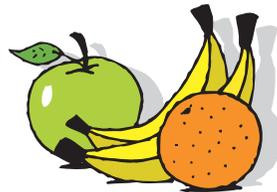
- 1-3 years: 2-4 servings
- 3-4 years: 4 or more servings
- 5 years and over: 5 servings

1 Serving = any of the following

- 1 medium sized fresh fruit for example apple, orange, banana, pear
- Small glass of unsweetened pure fruit juice – dilute with plenty of water
- Small bowl of tinned fruit in natural juice, small bowl of chopped fruit, fresh fruit salad
- 3 dessertspoons of stewed fruit
- 2 tablespoons of vegetables or 3 dessertspoons of salad
- Bowl of home-made vegetable soup



If your child does not eat much fruit, encourage her to eat more vegetables.



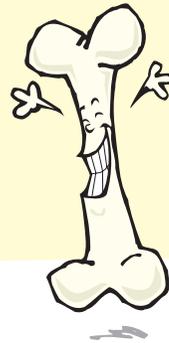
Milk, cheese and yogurt – Provide calcium for healthy bones and teeth

Recommended servings per day:

- 1-3 years: 3 servings
- 3-5 years: 3 servings

1 Serving = any of the following

- 1 glass of full fat milk ($\frac{1}{3}$ pint of milk)
- 1 carton of yogurt
- Matchbox sized piece of cheese (1oz)
- 2 cheese slices
- Small bowl of milk pudding
- 2 fromage frais



Low fat milk is not suitable as the main drink for children under 2 years of age. You can gradually introduce it after 2 years of age provided your child is a good eater and has a varied diet. Skimmed milk is not suitable for children under 5 years.

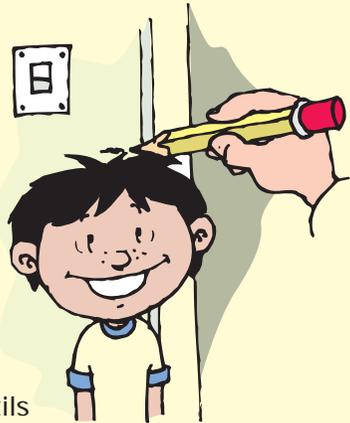
Meat, fish and alternatives – Provide protein for growth and development

Recommended servings per day:

- 1-3 years: 2 small servings
- 3-5 years: 2 servings

1 Serving = any of the following

- Small pork or lamb chop
- 2 slices roast or boiled meat
- 2 slices of chicken or turkey
- Medium fillet of fish
- 2 eggs
- 6 tablespoons of baked beans, peas, lentils



Chicken nuggets, sausages, fish fingers and burgers are lower in protein and often high in fat. They should not be a regular part of your child's diet.

Top Shelf of the Food Pyramid

Foods such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cakes, fizzy drinks and savoury snacks, like crisps, are on the top shelf of the Food Pyramid. These foods should not be a part of your child's daily diet. Filling up on foods from this shelf spoils your child's appetite for more nutritious food. Sugary food and drinks are not good for your child's teeth.



To have a balanced diet, your child should be having three meals a day with healthy snacks in between.

Suitable snacks

Children need lots of energy for growth and development, but they have small tummies and may not be able to eat large amounts at mealtimes. Children need healthy snacks to meet their energy needs.

Suitable snacks:

- Fresh fruit such as pears, satsumas, bananas, kiwi fruit
- Cheese cubes, slices or strings
- Crackers or rice cakes and cheese
- Bread- toast, rolls, baps, pitta bread
- Fruit brack, malt loaf, banana bread
- Scones- plain, fruit or wholemeal
- Small sandwiches
- Yogurt
- Fromage frais
- Homemade milkshake using yogurt and fruit
- Unsweetened breakfast cereal with milk (don't add sugar)
- Homemade soup
- Vegetable slices, sticks or wedges
- Milk

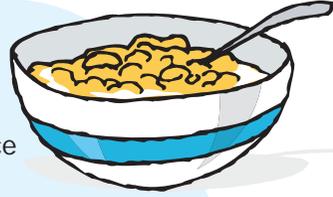


Don't give whole nuts and popcorn until your child is at least 5 years old – because of the danger of choking.

Sample meal planner

Breakfast

- Unsweetened cereal with milk
Toast with butter or margarine
Small glass of diluted unsweetened pure fruit juice



If your child has a good appetite in the morning, you could also include, poached egg, scrambled egg, boiled egg, grilled bacon or baked beans

Mid-Morning Snack

- Crackers and cheese or plain, fruit or wholemeal scone with butter or margarine (see page 7 for more snack ideas)
with cup of water or milk

Lunch

- Small sandwich with favourite filling (egg, ham, chicken, corned beef, tuna, cheese or banana) or
- Baked beans on toast or
- Scrambled egg on toast
with cup of milk or water and fresh fruit or yogurt



Make sure that your child drinks 6-8 cups of fluid every day. This includes water, milk and diluted, unsweetened pure fruit juice. Fruit juices should be diluted (1 part juice to 4-5 parts water) and given with meals.

Mid-afternoon snack

- Yogurt, fresh fruit or toast with cup of water or milk

Dinner

- Small portion of lean meat or mince or chicken or fish (no bones) with mashed potatoes and vegetables
- Shepherd's Pie with peas or sweetcorn
- Chicken Casserole and mashed potato
- Lasagne with sliced tomato
- Beef Stew with carrots and potatoes
- Spaghetti Bolognese with sliced cucumber
- Macaroni Cheese with baked beans
- Pasta with tomato sauce, cheese and broccoli
- Omelette, peas and mashed potato
- Grilled chicken breast, baked beans and oven chips
with cup of milk or water



Desserts

- Stewed fruit such as apple and custard
- Chop up some fresh fruit and serve with yogurt
- Rice pudding
- Yogurt

Bedtime Snack

- Milk
- Toast or a small bowl of unsweetened breakfast cereal with milk



Try to vary your child's meals and snacks as much as possible.

Healthy teeth

Caring for your child's first teeth is as important as the care of their adult teeth. When good habits are formed from an early age, it is easier to keep teeth healthy throughout life.

- 1 *Brush your child's teeth with a very soft toothbrush.*
- 2 *Do not use toothpaste when your child is very young. Fluoride toothpaste can be used twice a day from 2 years of age. Make sure only a smear or a small pea-sized amount is placed on the brush.*
- 3 *Supervise brushing up to age 7 years to ensure toothpaste isn't swallowed. Remember to brush teeth last thing at night.*
- 4 *It takes 3 minutes to brush teeth properly.*
- 5 *Do not give sugary foods and drinks in-between meals.*
- 6 *From the age of one year, your child should be drinking from a beaker or cup.*
- 7 *If your child uses a soother, do not dip it into sugar (honey, jams or syrup) or sugary drinks.*

Remember, bottles should never be left with children overnight. Drinks, including milk, given from a bottle stay in contact with teeth for longer and are more likely to cause tooth decay.



What should my child drink?

- Water and milk are the most tooth-friendly drinks for children and are suitable between meals and with meals.
- Unsweetened pure fruit juice is a good source of vitamin C. It is acidic and contains natural sugars so it should be diluted with plenty of water (1 part juice to 4-5 parts water) and given only with meals, for good dental health.
- Sugar-free squashes contain artificial sweeteners and are generally not recommended for young children. If given, they should be diluted with plenty of water (1 part squash to 8 parts water).
- Do not give fizzy drinks (minerals) as they contain a lot of sugar and acid, which are harmful to teeth. Fizzy drinks also fill up little tummies.
- Diet fizzy drinks contain artificial sweeteners and are not suitable for young children. They are also high in acid, which can harm teeth.
- Your child will need extra fluid if unwell with a raised temperature.

Remember, use a beaker with no lid for children over 1 year.



Iron for healthy blood

- Iron is a very important part of your child's diet as it helps both physical and mental development.
- Even a short-term lack of iron could cause your child to become iron deficient and anaemic.
- Symptoms of iron deficiency include pale complexion, lack of energy, poor concentration and irritability.



The best sources of iron are red meat (beef, minced beef, corned beef, lamb and pork), liver, sardines and chicken – so offer these foods regularly in dishes such as Shepherd's Pie, Lasagne or Spaghetti Bolognese.

Iron is also found in non-meat foods such as green leafy vegetables, eggs, beans and fortified breakfast cereals. The body doesn't use this iron as well as the iron in red meat. However, foods rich in vitamin C help your child to use the iron in non-meat foods.

This advice is particularly important if your child is vegetarian. Nutrient-rich foods such as milk, cheese and eggs can help to meet their needs for protein and some vitamins and minerals.

Non-meat sources of iron

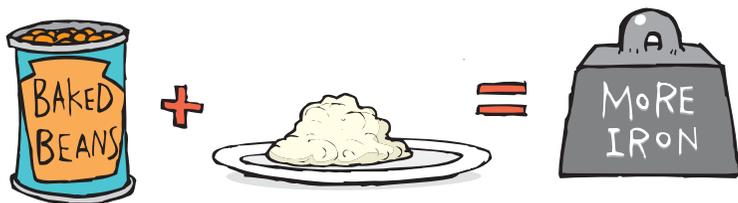
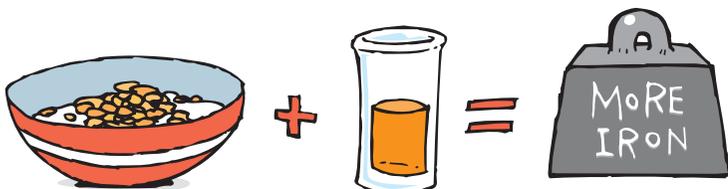
Breakfast cereals
Baked beans
Eggs
Green leafy vegetables



Foods rich in vitamin C

Mandarin oranges
Banana
Kiwi fruit
Tomatoes
Potatoes
Diluted unsweetened pure orange juice

More iron for your child

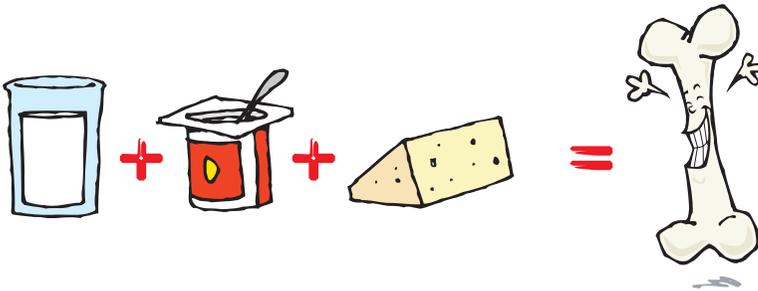


Do not give your child tea or coffee as they both reduce the amount of iron the body can use.



Calcium to build strong bones and teeth

Calcium is found in milk, cheese and yogurt. It is very important that your child has enough calcium in her diet to help build strong bones. Calcium is laid down in bones during childhood and teenage years. The body can't make calcium therefore, it must come from the food we eat. A good calcium intake is especially important during the growing years.



Other sources of calcium:

- Cheese cubes
- Home-made milkshakes or smoothies
- Cheese slices
- Cheese sauce
- Custard
- White sauce
- Rice pudding
- Lasagne
- Fromage frais
- Pizza with cheese topping

Food allergy

A food allergy means that your body's immune system reacts to something in the food you eat. Food allergies are more common in children with a family history of allergies such as asthma, eczema or hay fever.

Many children may appear to be allergic to certain foods. **It is important that if you think your child may have a food allergy that you have it checked out by a doctor. Do not restrict the food you offer your child, without the appropriate help and advice, as this may impair their growth and development.**

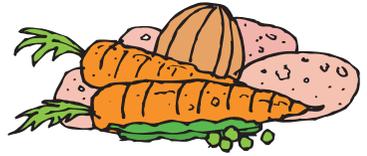


Children with a family history of asthma, eczema, hay fever or food allergy, should avoid full peanuts until age 5 and peanut products until after 3 years.

Constipation

Your child can become constipated for many reasons such as if she has not had enough drinks, is not eating enough fibre-containing foods, if she has been very inactive or when travelling on long journeys.

TRY



- 1 Encourage your child to have foods with a higher fibre content. Offer:
 - Wholegrain breakfast cereal, breads, pasta, rice
 - Fruit
 - Vegetables
 - Baked beans
 - Dried fruits such as raisins and sultanas may be used in recipes. They are not recommended as between meal snacks because of their sugar content.



Take care when offering your child lots of high-fibre foods. These may fill them up quickly and reduce their appetite for other nourishing foods. Offer your child a range of white and wholemeal breads and cereals.

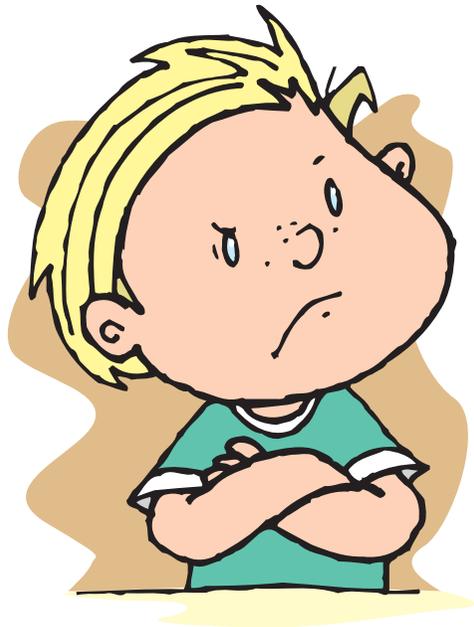
- 2 Ensure that your child drinks 6-8 cups of fluid per day. This includes water, milk and diluted unsweetened pure fruit juices.
- 3 Try to encourage your child to be physically active as this improves the muscle tone in the digestive system
- 4 Make sure your child has enough time each morning before crèche/ school to go to the toilet.

Fussy eating

Many children go through phases of refusing certain foods or at times refusing to eat anything at all.

Although this can be worrying it is a normal part of growing up. There is usually no cause for concern as long as your child is healthy and reaching her weight and height goals.

However, if you are in doubt, talk to your Public Health Nurse, Doctor or Practice Nurse.



Why has my healthy child started to refuse food?

- 1** *Your child may be eating too many sugary snacks between meals or may be filling up on large quantities of juice, milk or other drinks. Remember to limit milk to 1 pint a day, as drinking more than this can reduce your child's appetite for food.*
- 2** *Your child may be looking for attention.*
- 3** *Your child may be showing her independence and may want to feed herself.*

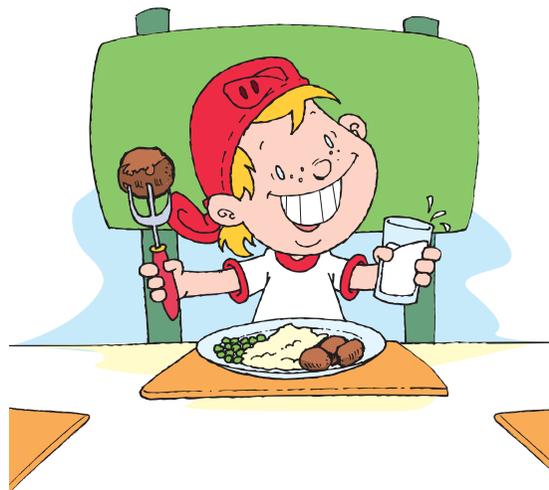
What can I do?



If your child refuses certain foods, choose another food from the same shelf of the pyramid, as they will contain similar nutrients.

If my child refuses to eat meat:

- Many children prefer meat to be soft and moist. Try to serve foods with gravy or sauce.
- Try minced beef, turkey, chicken and pork. Meatballs are a favourite with children.
- Pulse vegetables like lentils, chickpeas and baked beans make good casserole ingredients and can be used instead of meat.
- Grilled sausages, chicken nuggets, beef burgers or fish fingers are very popular with children. But remember – these options are lower in protein and higher in fat.
- Offer boiled, poached or scrambled egg.

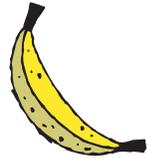




If your child tends to have a poor appetite at mealtimes, try not giving her drinks for 1 hour before a meal and perhaps only offer a drink at the end of a meal.

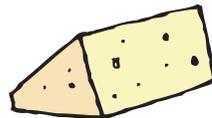
If my child refuses to eat vegetables:

- Use vegetables in making homemade vegetable soup or stews.
- Try diluted, unsweetened pure fruit juice.
- Many children prefer fruit so increase the range of fruits in your child's diet to make up for the lack of vegetables.
- Try to include oranges, apples, pears, carrot sticks and salad vegetables for a good vitamin intake.

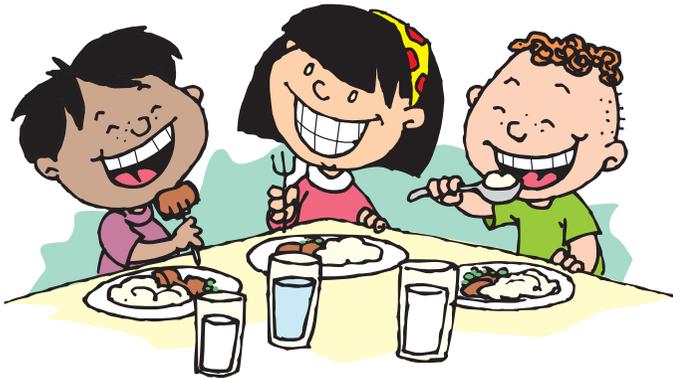


If my child refuses milk:

- Try to use milk in making other foods such as custard, pudding and sauces.
- Give your child yogurt, cheese or fromage frais.
- Add cheese to jacket potato, spaghetti, use in sauces, or use as a snack food.



Making the most of mealtimes



- Try to make mealtimes fun and sociable occasions.
- Use the mealtime as an opportunity to talk about food and where food comes from.
- Turn off the TV and radio while eating.
- Offer a wide variety of foods and include your child's favourite foods regularly.
- Give your child enough time to eat.
- Do not force your child to eat but be firm and encouraging.
- If a meal is refused, remove plate quietly after about 20 minutes and don't give your child anything to eat until the next meal or snack.
- Praise your child when food is eaten.
- Allow your child to feed herself and be prepared for a "mess".
- Do not use food as a reward or a punishment.

Talk to your Public Health Nurse, Doctor, Practice Nurse or Dietitian if you are concerned about your child's weight.



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