

# Healthy Eating for Your Toddler

AGE 12-24 MONTHS

*A Guide for Parents and Caregivers*





# Introduction

It's never too early to help your child learn to enjoy healthy eating. The first part of this practical guide gives you information on how to help your child develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime. Find answers to questions from parents, just like you, about feeding your toddler. It may surprise you to find out that it's not your job to get your child to eat.

In the second half of this book, you will learn how to use Canada's Food Guide to plan healthy meals and snacks.

We hope you will use this guide to help make mealtimes pleasant for the whole family.

## **What is healthy eating for toddlers?**

### **Healthy eating includes:**

1. How toddlers learn to enjoy a variety of food
2. The amount of food they eat
3. The type of food provided

Please note, in this booklet eating refers to all foods and beverages, and the toddler (12-24 months; also called "child" in this booklet) is referred to as either "he" or "she".



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## **Part One**

# **Making Mealtimes Pleasant**

*How to help your toddler develop a lifetime of healthy eating habits*

## Who *is* the boss?

Adults and toddlers each have jobs to do. Let everyone involved in the care of your child know about the adult's job and the child's job, and encourage them to follow this approach when feeding your child.

### Your job is to decide:

- What foods to serve
- When to serve them
- Where to serve them
- How to offer them

### Your toddler's job is to decide:

- How much to eat
- What food to eat from the foods you offer





## ***Adult's Job***

### ***What***

You decide which nutritious foods to serve. Offer basically the same food you prepare for the rest of the family because toddlers do not need special foods. Preparing something different does not encourage him to try new foods or learn to enjoy what the family is eating.

### ***When***

Toddlers like a regular routine. Your child needs you to offer meals and snacks at about the same times every day. This will usually be three meals and two to three snacks each day. If your child doesn't eat a lot at one meal or snack, he will soon have another opportunity to eat.

### ***Where***

Include your child at the family table where he can see you eating and learn about foods and how to feed himself.

### ***How***

Give your child the time to explore foods in a calm pleasant setting, without any pressure to eat a particular food or to eat a certain amount. Offer familiar foods along with new foods. He may eat only one or two of the foods you have offered. That's okay. You do not need to prepare something different for him.

## ***Child's Job***

He decides if he will eat what you offer, and how much. He knows how hungry he is. The amount of food your child eats at each meal and snack may change from day to day depending on his appetite, activity level and whether he is having a growth spurt. His appetite may also change when he is excited or overly tired. Toddlers are easily distracted. When hungry, they will focus on eating. When satisfied, they will focus on something else.



### ***Let yourself off the hook!***

Remember that some issues will resolve themselves in a pressure-free environment. It's about not putting pressure on your child and also about not putting pressure on yourself. As a parent, you want what's best for your toddler. When you stick to your job and let him do his, you give yourself permission to stop trying to get your child to eat. This is part of letting your child develop healthy eating habits, and helps you enjoy mealtimes as a family.

# Just One More Bite

Even with the best intentions, we sometimes put pressure on our children to eat. As a child, were you ever told you would not be allowed up from the table until you finished what was on your plate? Many of us were! It doesn't mean our parents or their parents were wrong. It means new information changes how we do things. For example, information and laws about seatbelts and smoking have changed drastically in recent years. Information and guidelines about feeding children have also changed.

## ***What's a parent to do?***

You can ease up on the pressure and everyone can be less stressed! Isn't that great news?

## ***What is pressure?***

Pressure is trying to make a child put something in his mouth that he doesn't want. Pressuring your child to eat does not help him learn to enjoy eating, and may make him avoid some foods. Pressure can come in many forms, and can often be hard to identify. The following list describes different forms of pressure. Even things that seem encouraging or playful can be forms of pressure.

## ***Avoid these Types of Pressure***

### **Forcing**

"You're going to stay in your chair until you eat three pieces of carrot"; or trying to feed a child after he has finished eating.

### **Punishing**

"If you don't eat your meat you can't have any watermelon for dessert."

### **Lecturing**

"Eat your orange, it's good for you."

### **Coaxing**

"Just taste it, you don't have to swallow it"; "just eat one bite"; "eat a bit to make Mommy happy."

### **Bribing and Rewarding**

"If you eat another bite of chicken, then you can have an extra story at bedtime."

### **Food Games**

Such as bringing the spoonful of food towards the child's mouth saying "here comes the choo-choo train into the station."



## What's a Parent to Do?

*Questions and answers about normal toddler eating*

What parents sometimes see as “challenges” at mealtimes are usually normal child behaviours that are part of learning about food and eating.

### **My 19-month old plays with his food, sometimes making a mess or throwing it on the floor. Is this normal?**

Yes, it's a perfectly normal way for a child to learn about new foods – how they look, feel, smell and taste. What appears to be “playing” may be part of your child learning to self-feed. So be patient and avoid pressure to eat. It's okay to be messy! Know your child is learning and developing.

### **My 18-month old often doesn't want what I make! Is she just a picky eater?**

Not necessarily. This is a tricky one as it could be a number of things. Sometimes it's just a normal part of how toddlers learn to enjoy a variety of

foods - it takes time. Another reason may be that she is trying to see how you will react. Or she may simply not be interested in a food that day even if she has eaten it before. Maybe the portion is too big and she's overwhelmed. Or she might even be holding out to try and get a favourite food. Finally, she might just not be hungry - trust her appetite.

So what can you do?

It's not a good idea to prepare something different. She might continue a pattern of not eating what's on the table if you do. She needs to learn how to enjoy what the family is eating. It's okay if she doesn't try every food on the table. If she's hungry, she will likely eat some of the family meal. Serve a small amount, and offer more if she wants more.

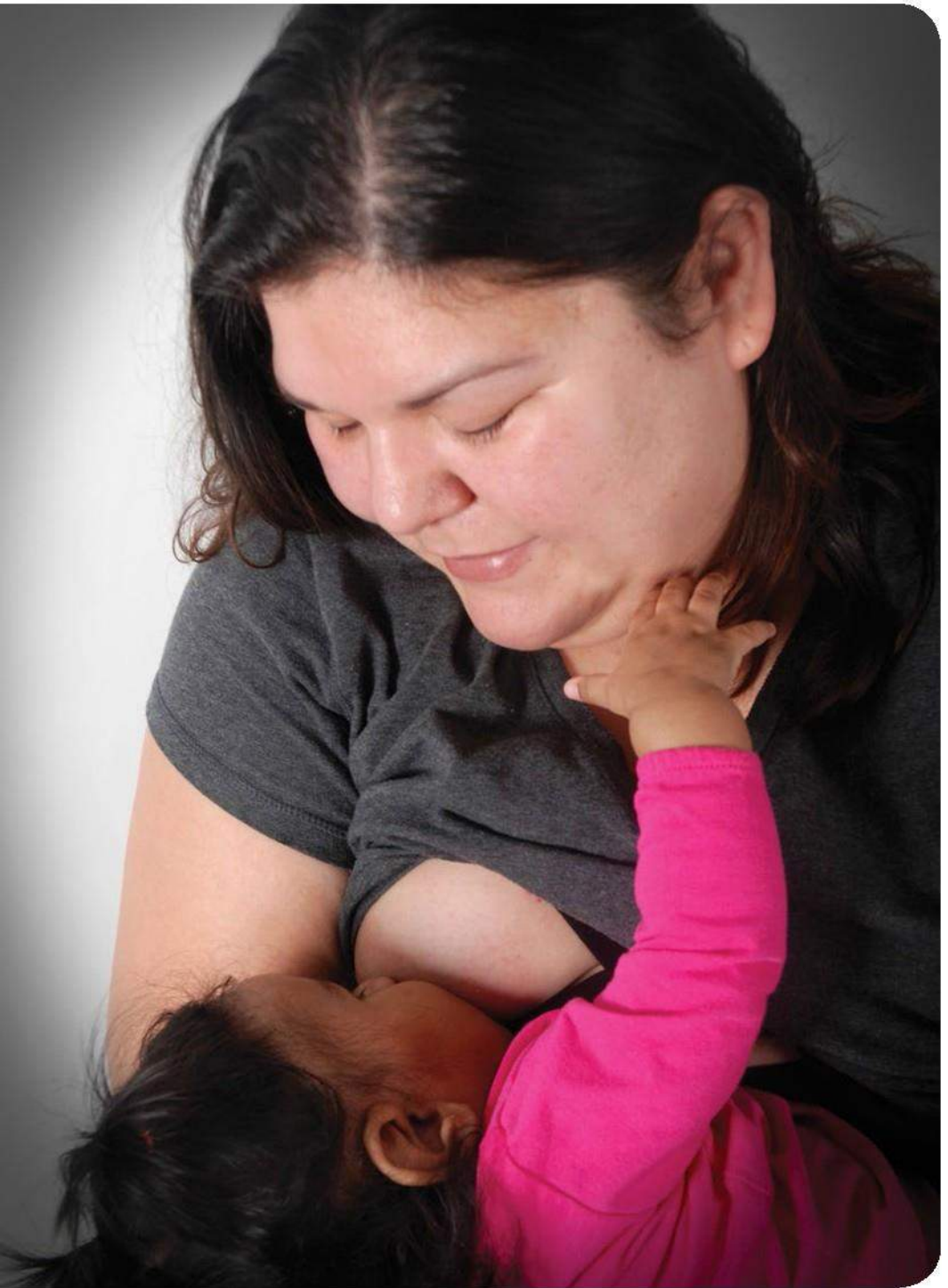
### **My one year old will eat a lot one day and only a little the next. I'm afraid he's not getting enough to eat.**

Here's the good news. A child won't starve by eating little some days or not eating a meal from time to time. Offer your child three meals and two to three snacks a day. If he doesn't want to eat one of them, he has another opportunity to eat within a few hours. It's okay to trust his appetite. Also, at 12 months he may start to eat less. This is because his growth rate slows down. Give him time to eat at his own pace. When he shows he is no longer interested in eating you can remove his plate.

The different amounts a child eats from day to day tend to average out so that he gets the calories and nutrients he needs. This is especially true if the child is offered healthy foods at regular meals and snacks, and is allowed to eat the amount he wants and stop when he is satisfied.

### **When my daughter doesn't want what I've offered to eat, she whines, cries and acts out. I have no idea what to do!**

Be firm about not giving her something different. That will only reinforce that whining works. Over time, she may continue to whine and demand different foods, instead of learning to try the foods that you offer. Be patient and calmly tell her "we are having these foods for dinner today", then let her decide what and how much to eat from the foods already on the table.



**My daughter is always asking for food, even when it's not a regular meal or snack time. Should I give it to her anyway?**

You should avoid giving snacks when it's not a scheduled snack time. Extra snacks can lead to tooth decay and interfere with the development of healthy eating habits. Offer water if your child is thirsty. If she is still breastfeeding, let her nurse when she wants. This demand feeding helps her maintain breastfeeding after 12 months of age.

**My son often can't seem to calm down enough to eat. Help!**

This may be normal behaviour for some children. There are things you can do to help. Try making sure there isn't too long a time between meals and snacks so he doesn't get extremely hungry and upset. Plan some quiet play time before meals and snacks, such as playing with blocks or reading a story. And avoid distractions at the table like TV, music or toys.

**My daughter is 22 months old and she turns down many foods I try lately. It feels like she says "no" to just about everything. What should I do?**

Remember, you have offered the food and your child's job is to decide if she will eat it, and how much. It's okay for her to say "no" to foods. Don't try to make her eat them, and don't make something else. It's best not to argue over food, so mealtimes are pleasant.

**My son often does not want to try new foods. What can I do?**

Don't worry, be patient and keep offering the foods. Let him decide if he wants to eat them or not. He may need to be offered a food 20 times or more before he learns to enjoy it. He may look at, touch, taste and spit out food. This is how a toddler gets to know a new food. Offer a variety of foods at each meal. Include foods that your child has eaten before. If he decides not to eat one or two foods, he can still get enough to eat from the foods you have served. Be a role model by enjoying your own food. When toddlers see the rest of the family enjoying a food, they're more likely to try it.



## Time Together

A big part of helping your child develop healthy eating habits is having pleasant mealtimes.

### ***Be a Role Model***

Eat meals together as a family, so you can be a role model. Children tend to copy what adults do. Serve food at the table. Help your child focus on eating by removing distractions. Turn off the TV and keep toys off the table.



### ***Enjoy Mealtimes***

Enjoy your time together. Simply by being at the family meal table, your child can learn about foods and table manners, and learn to enjoy conversation and social time with the family. Over time, children in families that eat together, eat better.

### ***No Special Foods Required***

Offer your toddler the same nutritious foods you serve the rest of the family (with the exception of choking hazards – see information on page 14). Your child doesn't need "toddler" foods at home or a "Kid's Menu" when eating out. The foods on such menus are often high in fat, sugar or salt and short on vegetables and fruits. A child's menu can simply be a smaller portion of a regular menu item.

### ***Learning Takes Time***

Don't worry if your toddler sometimes turns down what you've given her. That's normal for a toddler. It takes time to learn to enjoy a wide variety of foods. Just keep serving those foods over time, so your toddler can get used to them.

### **How do you know your toddler is learning healthy eating habits?**

1. She is trying some new foods.
2. She is eating at the table with the family.
3. She is eating what the rest of the family is eating.
4. She is included in the conversation at the meal, but is not the centre of attention (for example, don't comment on what she is or isn't eating, and don't fuss over her).
5. She stops when she has had enough to eat.
6. She shows that she wants more when she's hungry.

## You're the Boss

### **Limits**

Everyone needs to limit some types of food. Even for older children and adults, Canada's Food Guide says that it's important to limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium). Foods to limit include:

Cakes	Doughnuts	Nachos
Pastries	Muffins	Other salty snacks
Chocolate	Ice cream	Fruit flavoured drinks
Candies	Frozen desserts	Soft drinks
Cookies	French fries	Sports and energy drinks
Granola bars	Potato chips	Sweetened hot or cold drinks

### ***If they've never had it, they won't miss it!***

Don't be eager to introduce "limit" foods to your toddler. Children don't miss what they haven't had yet or what simply isn't in the house. If your child knows cookies are available, she may always want those and may have less interest in foods from Canada's Food Guide.

### ***Limiting some foods is not being "mean"***

A toddler can only eat so much, so mostly she should eat foods that really nourish her. It's not being "mean" to a toddler if you do not offer her foods like cookies every day. It's very easy to like those types of foods. But if your child fills up on them, she may have little or no room left in her stomach to eat nutritious foods.

### ***Beverages not recommended***

When certain drinks take the place of healthier foods in a toddler's diet, they may cause tooth decay, and they do not help children grow well.

#### **Toddlers should not have the following types of drinks:**

Sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, fruit drinks, fruit punches, sports drinks and flavoured water contain a lot of added sugar or artificial sweeteners and little or no nutritional value. Makers of such products may try to make them look healthy by adding one or more nutrients like vitamin C. But a fruit punch with 100% Daily Value for vitamin C is still not the same as real 100% fruit juice, which has more than just vitamin C.

Sports drinks are sometimes seen as "good" because they are associated with exercise, but basically they're sugar water with some minerals and vitamins added. Most people don't need sports drinks when they exercise. These drinks are unsuitable for toddlers.

Avoid hot or iced tea, coffee, cappuccinos and other caffeine-containing beverages. Some of these drinks are also high in sugar.

Energy drinks should never be served to children as they contain caffeine, sometimes at high levels, and other ingredients of possible concern. Labels carry warnings that they are not recommended for children.

### ***Food should not be a pacifier or a reward***

Do not use food to soothe an upset child unless she is upset from being overly hungry. Figure out if your child is actually hungry, or if she is sad, frightened, tired, or not feeling well. If she's not hungry, soothe her by giving her attention, hugs or a nap.

Do not use food as a reward for good behaviour, as this does not teach a healthy attitude towards food and eating.

# Choking Hazards

Children up to the age of four years are most at risk of choking on food because they do not chew as well as older children and adults. Some foods have a shape and size that can block the airway of a young child.

## ***Choking can occur in children when they:***

- Eat pieces of food that are too large
- Eat too fast
- Chew improperly
- Cry, laugh, run or jump around with food in their mouth

Your child should always eat sitting upright. Stay with your child while he is eating because a child who is choking may not be able to make noise or attract attention. Coughing is a sign that the child is removing the object naturally. All foods can potentially cause choking. Certain foods can be especially hazardous for children under four.

## ***Do not serve the following to children under four years of age:***

- **Foods that are hard, or hard to chew, such as:**
  - nuts, seeds, popcorn, raisins, corn, chips, candies (including marshmallows); also cough drops and gum
  - raw carrot sticks, raw celery, or other hard raw vegetables or fruits  
Grate vegetables or soften hard raw vegetables or fruits by cooking. Remove tough skin (e.g. baked potato skin) before serving toddler.  
**Tip for vegetable platters with dip**—cook hard vegetables such as carrot and turnip until soft but not mushy, and then chill and cut into thin sticks, so they can be used for dipping. Softer raw vegetables can be included on the platter, such as thin strips of sweet peppers, or thin half slices of cucumber or zucchini.
- **Foods that are round and/or a size that could block a child's airway, such as:**
  - whole grapes, whole cherry or grape tomatoes, and whole wieners  
Cut these types of foods into quarters lengthwise and then into small pieces. Wieners and sausages are usually high in fat and salt (sodium) and should be avoided.

- **large chunks of food such as fruit and cheese, and especially chunks that are harder to chew, such as meat, poultry and some shellfish**

Cut large chunks of food into smaller pieces - this includes foods in mixed dishes such as soups, stews, casseroles and toppings on pizza.

- **Fish, meat or poultry with bones**  
Carefully remove all bones from fish, meat or poultry before serving.
- **Foods on toothpicks or skewers**
- **Foods containing pits**  
Remove pits or seeds from fruit (such as peaches, cherries, watermelon, oranges, apples, grapes, etc.) before serving.
- **Peanut butter or melted cheese in a lump (such as on a spoon)**  
Spread peanut butter or melted cheese thinly on bread or crackers – never serve these foods alone in a lump, as they could get stuck in the throat and block air flow.





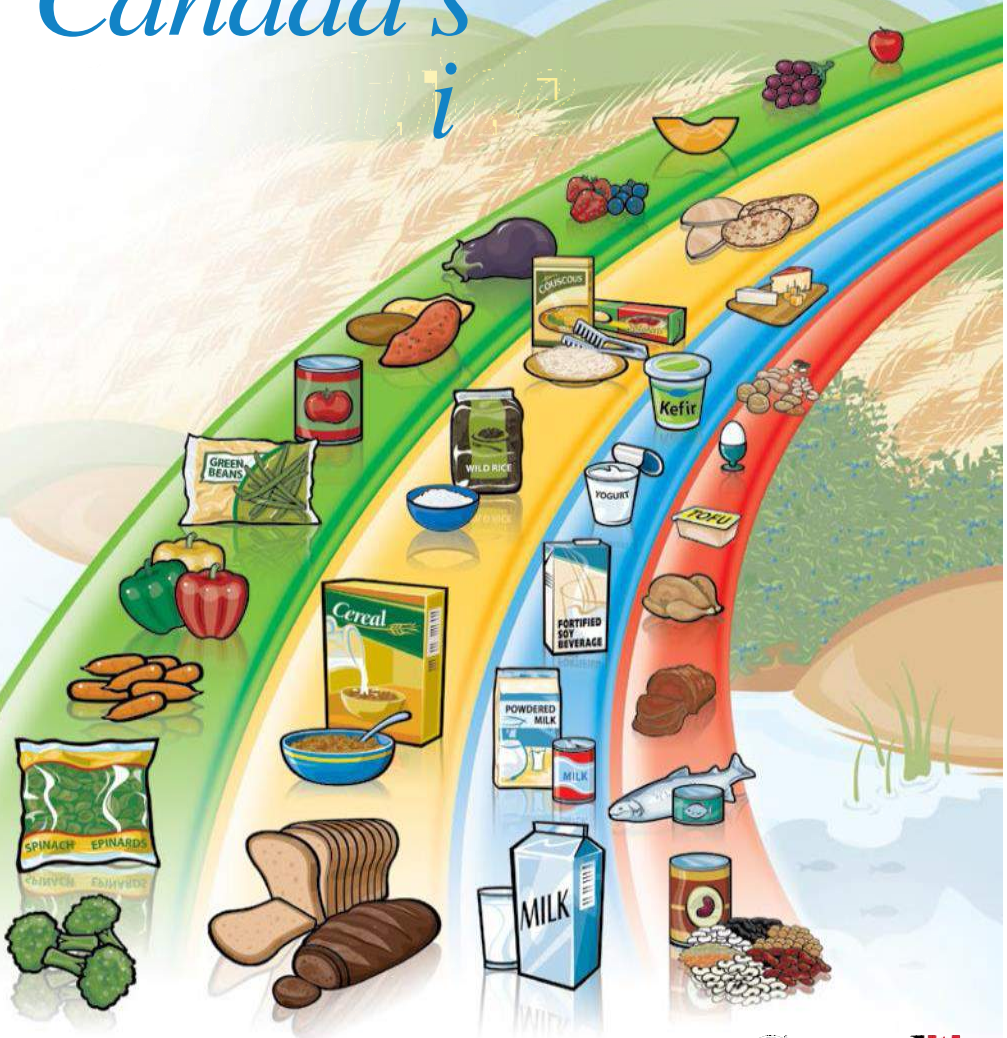
Health  
Canada

Santé  
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Your health and  
safety... our priority.

Votre santé et votre  
sécurité... notre priorité.

# Eating Well with Canada's i



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## Part Two

# Serving Healthy Foods

*Using Canada's Food Guide for your toddler*

## Using *Canada's Food Guide* for Your Toddler

Canada's Food Guide is the basis for healthy eating for age two years and up. This booklet is for the 12-24 month old. However, since toddlers should be eating basically the same foods as the rest of the family, you can use Canada's Food Guide to plan meals and snacks for your toddler.

### ***The Four Food Groups of Canada's Food Guide are:***

- Vegetables and Fruit
- Grain Products
- Milk and Alternatives
- Meat and Alternatives

**For information and tips on *Canada's Food Guide* visit:**  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)





### ***Suggestions to help ensure your toddler gets the variety of foods she needs:***

- Offer foods from at least three food groups at breakfast. One of these groups should be the Vegetables and Fruit group.
- Offer foods from four food groups at lunch and supper. From the Vegetables and Fruit group, offer at least one vegetable and one fruit.
- Offer foods from at least two food groups in a snack, including at least one food from the Vegetables and Fruit group.

### **How much food should I offer?**

Canada's Food Guide describes the serving sizes for the foods in each group. From each food group, offer about half of one Food Guide Serving. Trust your child's appetite. She may not finish what you offer and that's okay. Do not pressure her to eat it. If she shows she wants more, it's okay to give her more.

### **What about bottled toddler foods?**

Bottled "toddler foods" are not needed and don't provide much chewing opportunity to help your child learn to chew. Also, if you give your child bottled toddler foods, it won't help her to learn to eat the foods the rest of the family is eating. Simply make some changes in the size of pieces or texture of some family foods for your toddler, to reduce the choking hazard. For example, you will need to cut meats, fish and poultry or other large chunks of food into small pieces, and cook hard vegetables like carrots, instead of serving them raw.

## The Four Food Groups

Canada's Food Guide shows the amounts for one Food Guide Serving. For a 12-24 month old, offer **half** a Food Guide Serving and let your child have more if he wants it. **The following sections list examples of half Food Guide Servings.**

### Vegetables and Fruit

Canada's Food Guide recommends eating vegetables and fruit at all meals and as snacks.

#### *Examples of half a Food Guide Serving*

60 mL (4 tablespoons) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables, or cooked leafy vegetables

125 mL (8 tablespoons) raw leafy vegetables

60 mL (4 tablespoons) fresh, frozen or canned fruits

60 mL (1/4 cup) 100% fruit or vegetable juice

1/2 fruit such as an orange or a banana

#### Tips

- Offer vegetables and fruit more often than juice to help make sure your child gets enough fibre.
- If you do serve juice, choose unsweetened 100% juice, including “concentrated” (such as frozen concentrated orange juice), or made “from concentrate” (such as some canned apple juice).
- **Limit juice to 125 mL (1/2 cup) per day for your toddler.** Too much juice leaves less room for healthy food choices.
- If you offer fruit juice to your child at a meal or snack in a sippy cup, do not let them leave the table with it. Sipping fruit juice over a long time could cause tooth decay.
- Many beverages use the word “fruit” in the name, but are not 100% fruit juice. They use words like beverage, drink, punch, cocktail, ade (as in lemonade), or “made with juice” or “contains fruit juice” (which is not the same as being 100% juice).

- Look for lower sodium choices in canned vegetables, vegetable juices and tomato juice.
- Local wild berries such as blueberries, bakeapples, and raspberries are included in this food group.
- Serve vegetables in different ways - cooked, grated, in salads or raw with dips (see section on choking on pages 14–15). Some popular books recommend putting grated or pureed vegetables in recipes. Although there's nothing wrong with trying new ways to include vegetables in your meals, it shouldn't be about tricking your child. You should also serve those same vegetables "as is" so your child can learn to enjoy their unique tastes and textures.

## Grain Products

For a 12-24 month old, offer **half** a Food Guide Serving and let your child have more if he wants it.

### *Examples of half a Food Guide Serving*

1/2 slice of bread (15 g)

1/4 bagel (20 g)

1/4 pita or 1/4 tortilla (15 g)

60 mL (4 tablespoons) cooked rice or pasta

90 mL (6 tablespoons) hot cereal or 15 g (1/3 cup) cold cereal

1/2 whole grain muffin (15 g)

### **Tips**

- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day. Look for the words "whole grain" in front of any type of grain such as wheat, rye or multigrain. Brown rice, rolled oats and oatmeal are by nature whole grains, even if the label doesn't say "whole grain".
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar and salt (for example, choose plain rather than sugar-coated cereals).

## Milk and Alternatives

For a 12-24 month old, offer **half** a Food Guide Serving and let your child have more if she wants it.

### **Examples of half a Food Guide Serving**

125 mL (1/2 cup) milk (whole milk, 3.25% M.F.; the Food Guide recommends lower fat milk for those age two years and up, but **Health Canada recommends whole milk for children under two years of age**).

90 g or mL (6 tablespoons) yogurt

25 g (3/4 oz.) cheese

Health Canada recommends breastfeeding up to two years of age and older, with the addition of solid foods at six months. When your baby continues to breastfeed after 12 months of age you should continue to give her a daily supplement of 400 IU (10 mcg) of vitamin D, up to 24 months of age, even if she also drinks some whole cow milk. If you completely stop breastfeeding before 24 months, stop giving the vitamin D supplement. Your baby will get vitamin D from whole cow milk (which has vitamin D added during processing). *(Paragraph updated Feb. 2017)*

### Tips

- Offer your child 500 mL (2 cups) of whole milk every day to help meet calcium and vitamin D needs.
- In the 500 mL (2 cups) total, count the milk you add to cereal, cream soups and chowders, and to puddings you make at home (including those made from instant pudding powder). Ready-to-eat puddings have much less calcium than homemade and may not contain vitamin D.

### Cautions:

- A child needs milk every day, but too much may interfere with eating other foods. If your child drinks a lot more than 500 mL (2 cups) of milk a day and she has a poor appetite for other foods, you may need to limit her milk. Don't give her much more than 500 mL (2 cups) a day.
- Soy, rice, and other vegetarian beverages (like almond milk), even if they are fortified, do not have enough fat to meet a toddler's needs, and should not be given before two years of age. Some of these beverages are also low in protein and other nutrients.



In addition to the recommended 500 mL (2 cups) of milk, you can also offer small amounts of milk alternatives such as yogurt, cottage cheese, and hard cheeses. They provide different tastes and textures for your child to enjoy. Choose hard cheeses over processed, since processed cheeses and spreads have more sodium (salt).

## Meat and Alternatives

For a 12-24 month old, offer **half** a Food Guide Serving and let your child have more if he wants it.

### *Examples of half a Food Guide Serving*

1 egg

37 g (1 1/4 oz.)/60 mL (4 tablespoons) cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat

90 mL (6 tablespoons) cooked or canned legumes such as kidney beans, peas pudding, baked beans or chick peas

15 mL (1 tablespoon) peanut butter or nut butters

### **Tips**

- Select lean meat and prepare them with little or no added fat or salt.
- Choose fresh meats instead of processed meats such as bologna, wieners, and salami because they are usually high in fat and salt (sodium).
- Some children find meat hard to chew. If this is a problem, cook it until it is softer. Cooking in extra liquid is a good way to make meat tender.
- Include at least two servings of fish each week in the family meals.
- Include sources of fibre such as legumes, like dried peas in pea soup and peas pudding, baked beans, kidney beans in chili, lentils in soup, and chick peas in hummus.
- This food group also includes traditional foods such as trout, partridge, seal and game meats such as moose, rabbit and caribou.

### **Cautions:**

- Spread peanut butter or nut butter thinly on bread or crackers – never serve these foods alone in a lump, as they could get stuck in the throat and block air flow.
- Do not give nuts or seeds, as these are a choking hazard for toddlers.
- For toddlers and everyone else in the family, do not serve the liver or kidneys of moose or caribou, as they are too high in cadmium.

## Oils and Fats

Healthy fats are important for brain development and help meet your toddler's nutritional needs. Include some unsaturated fat in your child's meals and snacks, such as:

- Vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean
- Small amounts of salad dressing and mayonnaise
- Soft non-hydrogenated margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats

**Caution:** For toddlers and everyone else in the family, you should limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening as these are higher in saturated and/or trans fats. It is important not to restrict nutritious food choices for your toddler because of their fat content.

You can offer your child:

- Whole (3.25% M.F.) milk or breast milk
- Yogurt (with more than 2% M.F.)
- Avocado
- Hard cheese
- Nut butters (thinly spread), like peanut butter and almond butter
- Fatty fish (like salmon and rainbow trout)

## Water

Offer tap water for thirst. When the weather is hot or your child is very active, offer water more often. Bottled water is an option when tap water is unsafe.

# Sample Meal Plan

## Breakfast

Whole grain cereal

Blueberries, fresh or frozen (thawed)

Whole (3.25% M.F.) milk, 1/2 cup\*

Whole grain toast with soft non-hydrogenated margarine

## Snack

Yogurt with chopped banana

Water

## Lunch

Quarter of an egg salad sandwich on whole grain bread with soft non-hydrogenated margarine and mayonnaise-type dressing (younger toddlers might have the same foods separate, 1/2 a boiled egg, chopped with dressing and half a slice of whole grain bread with soft non-hydrogenated margarine)

Thin strips of green pepper

Whole (3.25% M.F.) milk, 1/2 cup\*

Thin apple slices

## Snack

Whole grain bread with smooth peanut butter

Grated carrot

Whole (3.25% M.F.) milk, 1/2 cup\*

## Supper

Home cooked spaghetti with meat sauce

Garden salad made with romaine lettuce, with salad dressing

Dinner roll (quarter to half depending on size) with soft non-hydrogenated margarine

Canned peaches (in juice or water, cut in small pieces)

Whole (3.25% M.F.) milk, 1/2 cup\*

Some children may need a snack between supper and bedtime.

\* See page 22 for tips and cautions about recommended milk intake for toddlers.



# Key Points for Meal Plans

## What?

- Breakfast at least three Food Groups
- Lunch and supper four Food Groups
- Snacks at least two Food Groups
- Vegetables and Fruit Group at all meals and snacks

## How Much?

- Offer half a Food Guide Serving
- She may not finish it or she may want more... let her decide



## **Sodium (Salt)**

On average, 12-24 month olds get double the sodium they need. Acquiring a taste for salt as a toddler may foster a life-time preference for this taste. Eating too much sodium can cause high blood pressure, which could lead to stroke, heart disease and kidney disease.

Most sodium we eat is found in processed foods like deli meats, soups, packaged noodle/rice/potato mixes, canned and frozen dinners, other ready-to-eat foods, fast foods, and restaurant meals. Limit these foods for your toddler. Compare the Nutrition Facts table on similar foods to help choose lower sodium products.

## **Artificial Sweeteners**

Children do not need artificial sweeteners. Artificial sweeteners include aspartame, sucralose and acesulfame potassium.

Health Canada has set upper limits for acceptable daily intakes of artificial sweeteners. There is a concern that children may go over these limits if they eat or drink too many products sweetened with aspartame, sucralose and/or acesulfame potassium.

Let your toddler enjoy the natural flavour of foods without added sweeteners.

## **Food Allergies**

If your family has no history of allergies, there is no need to delay the introduction of any particular food. If your family does have a history of allergies, speak with your doctor about any concerns you may have.



## Looking for More Information?

Talk to your health care provider, public health nurse or registered dietitian.

For more information on health and wellness visit:

[www.gov.nl.ca/health](http://www.gov.nl.ca/health)

For information on breastfeeding visit:  
Baby-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador  
[www.babyfriendlynl.ca](http://www.babyfriendlynl.ca)

For information and tips on *Canada's Food Guide*  
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