

Feeding Your Toddler



Your child is considered a toddler between the ages of one and three, and you can expect some changes in their feeding habits. You may notice that your child is eating less like an infant and beginning to follow a diet more like your own. By their first birthday, your child will likely be eating a variety of solid foods and following a more predictable eating schedule. You may also notice that your child is developing a preference for certain tastes. Your toddler's appetite may decrease as well since your child is not growing as quickly. This is a very exciting time for you and your toddler, as he or she will soon be walking, talking and eating on their own!



Dealing with a picky eater

- Be patient at meal time if your toddler doesn't seem to like anything you serve.
- If he or she refuses to eat, simply put the plate away and offer it again later.
- Offer a variety of flavors and textures and encourage new foods.
- Honor your child's taste preferences, but don't allow him or her to fill up on unhealthy foods like cookies and chips.
- Continue to reinforce wholesome, healthy foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Be a good role model to your child by eating healthy, too.

Age	Milk type
Younger than 12 months	Breast milk or iron-fortified formula.
12 to 24 months	Whole milk. Breastfeeding can continue after 12 months of age if desired. Talk with your network pediatrician or registered dietitian before switching to reduced-fat or low-fat milk before 24 months.
Older than 24 months	Low-fat (1%) or non-fat (skim) milk.

What's off limits

The most important consideration at this age is to avoid foods that may pose a choking hazard to your child. Even though your toddler may have several teeth by now, he or she will not master the art of chewing until later in life. Avoid foods such as hard candies, raw carrots and celery, whole grapes and cherry tomatoes, large pieces of meat or vegetables,

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and hot dogs. Also, if your child has experienced an adverse reaction to a certain food, talk to your network pediatrician about when to introduce these foods again. Often times a child will tolerate certain foods better as they grow older, even if they experienced an adverse reaction before. And remember that seasoned foods are ok, but avoid heavy seasoning. You want your child to develop a taste for the natural flavors of foods.

Time for Self Feeding

Now that your toddler is eating a variety of solid foods, he or she may begin showing interest in self feeding. Allow your child to begin exploring self feeding by picking foods up with their fingers. It is expected for your child to be a little messy at first, but don't allow your child to throw food or utensils. Avoid using breakable cups and plates, as spills are expected. Allow your child to try using a spoon, but know that they will not master this skill until later.

Nutrition Matters

- Encourage a variety of foods from all food groups – protein, grains, dairy, fruits & vegetables.
- Discourage snacking throughout the day, and establish set meal-times instead.
- Encourage three meals per day and two snacks in between meals.
- Avoid restricting fat and cholesterol from your toddler's diet before the age of two.
- A portion size for a toddler is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of an adult's normal portion.
- Avoid high-sugar, high-calorie desserts like ice cream, candy and cookies. Encourage more nutritious alternatives instead, like yogurt and fresh fruit.

Sample Healthy Menu for a 1-Year Old

Breakfast	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup iron-fortified breakfast cereal $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bananas and strawberries, sliced 4 oz. whole milk
Snack	4 oz. fruit yogurt
Lunch	$\frac{1}{2}$ grilled ham and cheese sandwich on wheat bread $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable soup 4 oz. whole milk
Snack	4 oz. applesauce 2 graham crackers 4 oz. whole milk
Dinner	2-3 oz. cooked chicken, diced $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked sweet potato, mashed $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked green beans 4 oz. whole milk



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