# HEALTHY EATING FOR TODDLERS GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS





## A healthy diet for a toddler is different to that for an older child or an adult because toddlers need more fat and less fibre than that recommended for others

- Use some butter, margarine and oils in cooking.
- Give a mixture of white and some wholemeal/wholegrain breads and cereals because just wholegrain foods are too filling for toddlers.
- Give toddlers small servings of cake and biscuits with fruit for some puddings.



## Toddlers will get adequate amounts of all the nutrients and energy they need if their diet is based on combining foods from the five food groups

• The nutrients in a healthy, balanced diet are protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals, omega 3 and 6 fats, and other protective plant compounds, fibre and fluid.



### Toddlers will eat best when they have a routine of three meals and two to three snacks per day planned around their sleeping pattern

• Eat with your toddlers and praise them when they eat well, as this will encourage them to enjoy their meals.



#### Give your toddler between six and eight drinks per day to ensure adequate hydrationthat is, a drink with each meal and snack

- More may be needed in very hot weather or if they are particularly active.
- Use beakers and cups instead of bottles.
- The best drinks to give between meals and snacks are water or milk.
- Dilute drinks containing sweeteners with a lot of water.
- Large quantities of juices may reduce your toddlers' appetite or cause loose stools.
- Do not give tea, coffee or fizzy drinks to toddlers.



#### Foods that may cause harm

- Keep very salty foods to a minimum. This includes crisps and other salty snacks.
- Sugary, acidic drinks such as squashes and 'fruit juice' drinks can cause tooth decay if drunk frequently between meals.
- Do not give raw eggs or raw shellfish to toddlers as they may cause food poisoning. Make sure eggs are well cooked right through.
- Do not give shark, swordfish and marlin to toddlers, as they may contain high levels of mecury. Limit smaller oily fish to twice a week for girls and four times a week for boys. e.g. sardines, mackerel, salmon, trout, eel.



#### Do not give whole nuts to toddlers because of the risk of choking

• Toddlers who have parents, brothers or sisters who suffer from hay fever, asthma, eczema or food allergies should not have peanuts or peanut butter before they are three years old. Other nuts such as walnuts, almonds, cashew nuts are fine if they are chopped or ground or as a nut butter.



#### Give toddlers a vitamin A & D supplement each day

- This is for normal growth and development and to prevent rickets.
- It is especially important for fussy eaters, toddlers of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origin and those living in the northern areas of the UK.
- Vitamin drops usually include vitamin C which helps with iron absorption.



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