



Feeding the under 3s  
the food they need

# Meals, Snacks and Drinks for Toddlers

## Guidance & Tips for Parents

[www.infantandtoddlerforum.org](http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org)

Midday and evening meals may be hot or cold – offer two courses. Nutritious meals and snacks combine foods from Food Groups 1-4. Small amounts of foods from Food Group 5 can be added for extra flavour. To protect teeth, sweet foods and drinks should be limited to mealtimes and no more than one snack per day.

### The food groups are:

- 1 Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods,
- 2 Fruit and vegetables,
- 3 Milk, cheese and yogurt,
- 4 Meat, fish, eggs, nuts and pulses,
- 5 Foods high in fat and sugar.

### Meals

#### Nutritious breakfasts:

- Are based on a starchy food such as bread, toast or breakfast cereal
- Include milk, yogurt, cheese, egg or meat such as bacon or ham
- Include some fruit.

#### Examples:

- Breakfast cereal with milk, plus some fruit pieces
- Egg with toast and some diluted fruit juice.

#### Savoury courses:

- Are based on starchy foods – bread, rice, potatoes or pasta
- Include vegetables cooked, raw or in sauces or soups
- Include a food from Food Groups 3 or 4 to provide some protein.

#### Examples:

- Shepherd's pie served with one or two vegetables
- Ham pizza served with salad vegetables
- Dhal with rice and vegetables
- Tuna pasta bake with vegetables
- Leek and potato soup with grated cheese
- Meat or cheese sandwiches with raw vegetable sticks.

#### Second courses:

- Include fruit on its own or
- Along with yogurt or a pudding made with nutritious ingredients such as milk, flour, rice, bread, eggs or nuts.

#### Examples:

- Yogurt with fruit
- Fresh fruit with a biscuit
- Fruit crumble with custard or ice cream
- Fruit sponge pudding
- Pancakes with pureed fruit or fruit pieces.

### Snacks

#### Combine foods from Food Groups 1-4.

#### Examples:

- Fresh fruit but not dried fruit
- Vegetable sticks, e.g. carrot, cucumber, pepper, baby corn with dips based on yogurt, cream cheese or pulses in such dishes as hummus
- Wholegrain breakfast cereals with milk
- Cheese cubes and crackers/breadsticks or chapatti
- Sandwiches, bread rolls and pitta breads with fillings
- Vegetable bhajis
- Slices of pizza with a plain dough base that has not been fried
- Yogurt and fromage frais
- Crumpets, scones, pitta bread, toast or French toast with a spread
- Currant buns and teacakes
- Pancakes, fruit muffins and plain biscuits\*
- Cakes containing dried fruit or vegetables or nuts, e.g. fruit cake and carrot cake.\*

Spreads include butter, jam\*, honey\*, peanut butter, chocolate spread\*, cream cheese, cottage cheese.

\* indicates snacks or spreads that contain added sugar and must be limited to protect teeth.

### Drinks

#### Offer to toddlers at each meal and snack – about 100-120ml or 3-4oz is adequate.

#### Examples:

- Water is a good choice and should also be available throughout the day especially in hot weather and after physical activity
- Milk does not damage teeth but should be limited to three drinks a day or less if toddlers are also eating yogurt and cheese
- Sweet drinks including fruit juices, smoothies, squashes and fizzy drinks can all damage teeth because they contain sugar and acid. They should only be offered occasionally and, as with sweet foods, only with meals and at no more than one snack per day
- Diet fizzy drinks and sugar free squashes are acidic and will also damage teeth.

Breakfasts	Include Food Groups
Breakfast cereal fortified with vitamins and minerals with milk/ yogurt and some fresh or dried fruit + water to drink	1,2,3
Baked beans on toast + diluted fruit juice to drink	1,4,5
Egg with toast and pieces of fruit + water to drink	1,2,4
Flatbreads e.g. parathas and slices of fruit + milk to drink	1,2,3
Grilled bacon sandwich with tomatoes + water to drink	1,2,4
Pancakes with sliced fruit and honey, jam or syrup + milk to drink	1,2,3,5
Porridge with milk/yogurt and some fresh or dried fruit + water to drink	1,2,3
Toasted crumpets, hot cross buns or tea bread + hot chocolate milk to drink	1,2,3,5
Toast or a bagel with cheese spread or cream cheese + fruit slices and water to drink	1,2,3
Toast with butter and jam + fruit slices and a glass of milk	1,2,3,5
Toast with peanut butter + fruit slices and a glass of milk	1,2,3,4

Second Sweet Courses	Include Food Groups
Bakewell tart served with fruit slices	1,2,4,5
Bread and butter pudding including dried fruit	1,2,3,5
Egg custard tart with fruit slices	1,2,3,5
Fresh fruit or tinned fruit with yogurt or evaporated milk	2,3
Fresh fruit with a biscuit or piece of cake or chocolate buttons	1,2,5
Fresh fruit with cream such as strawberries and cream	2,5
Fruit crumble with custard	1,2,3,5
Fruit pie with custard	1,2,3,5
Fruit salad with cream or ice cream	2,5
Fruit sponge cakes such as Apple Charlotte	1,2,5
Jelly with fruit pieces	2,5
Other fruit based puddings such as summer pudding	1,2,5
Quick mixed milk puddings such as Angel Delight™ served with some fruit slices	2,3,5
Rice pudding served with fruit	1,2,3,5
Sponge cake with custard	1,3,5
Yogurt with fruit	2,3

Savoury courses – providing foods from Food Groups 1,2 & 4
<b>Courses with meat</b>
Bacon quiche with 1-2 vegetables
Beef Stroganoff with rice and 1-2 vegetables
Lean meat burger in a bun with 1-2 vegetables
Meat and vegetable curry with rice/chapatti/naan bread
Meat and vegetable stew or casserole with potato, pasta or rice
Meat or bean lasagne and an extra vegetable on the side
Moussaka with a vegetable
Pizza with a meat topping and salad vegetables
Roast meat, roast potatoes and 1-2 vegetables
Sausage, mashed potato and 1-2 vegetables
Shepherd's pie and 1-2 vegetables
Spaghetti bolognese including meat in the sauce and an extra vegetable on the side
Steak and kidney pie with 1-2 vegetables
Sweet and sour chicken with rice and 1-2 vegetables
Tortilla/pancake with meat and vegetable filling
<b>Courses with fish</b>
Fish and pasta bake with 1-2 vegetables
Fish and potato cakes and 1-2 vegetables
Fish and potato pie and 1-2 vegetables
Fish and vegetable curry with rice
Fish fingers and chips and 1-2 vegetables
Jacket potato with tuna mayonnaise and sweetcorn
Poached or baked fish with rice/potatoes and 1-2 vegetables
<b>Courses with meat or fish</b>
Meat/fish and vegetable kebabs such as chicken and vegetable skewers
Risotto with meat/fish and 1-2 vegetables
Stir-fried vegetables with meat or fish and rice
<b>Vegetarian meals using eggs</b>
Potato frittata with a vegetable or salad
Scrambled eggs on toast with tomatoes or another vegetable
Vegetable omelette served with bread, potato, rice or pasta
<b>Vegetarian meals using pulses</b>
Baked beans on toast with 1-2 vegetables
Dhal with rice/chapattis and a vegetable
Falafel burgers with a vegetable
Jacket potato with baked beans and a vegetable
Lentil and vegetable soup with bread/toast
Minestrone soup
Pasta with vegetable sauce including lentils or chick peas
Rice and peas with an extra vegetable

Savoury courses – providing foods from Food Groups 1,2 & 3
Jacket potato with cheese and 1-2 vegetables
Leek and potato soup with grated cheese
Macaroni cheese and salad vegetables on the side
Pizza with vegetable only topping; served with salad
Quesadilla with cheese and vegetable filling
Toasted sandwich or panini with cheese and tomato/other vegetable
Tomato/vegetable soup with a bread roll with cheese
Vegetable pasta bake with cheese
Vegetable quiche