

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 a more nutritious diet 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.
- Toddlers can have a small fruit based pudding or some cake or biscuits with fruit for a second course once a day 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 along with a daily vitamin D supplement

- 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 hydration- that 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 are water or milk.
- Avoid all sweet drinks including fruit juices and fruit smoothies as they are high sugar drinks.
- 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. Limit crisps and other salty snacks to less than once per week.
- Sugary, acidic drinks such as squashes and 'fruit juices' 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. Only red lion eggs can be safely eaten lightly cooked.
- Do not give, swordfish, marlin or shark to toddlers, as they may contain high levels of mercury. 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 toddlers whole nuts due to risk of choking

- Only offer nuts that are chopped or ground 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.