



# COMBINING FOOD FOR A BALANCED DIET GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS



To provide a healthy balanced diet for your child offer foods from each and all of the five food groups listed below each day. Don't worry if your toddler doesn't eat all of these every day. Simply aim to achieve an average over each week.



## **BREAD, RICE, POTATOES, PASTA and other starchy foods**

**Serve at each meal and offer some as snacks. For example:**

- Breakfast – cereal and/or bread, toast or chapatti.
- Lunch and evening meal – potatoes, rice, pasta, couscous, bread, yam or plantain.
- Snacks – bread, bread sticks, rice cakes or crackers, other foods based on flour such as pancakes, tea bread and scones.



## **FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

**Serve at each meal so that your toddler learns they are a normal part of each meal and at some snacks.**

- Serve fruit at breakfast and at least one vegetable and one fruit at lunch and the evening meal.
- Set a good example by eating fruit and vegetables yourself.
- Cut raw fruit and vegetables into slices, cubes or sticks as toddlers find these easier to eat than a large whole fruit.
- Toddlers often prefer the flavour of vegetables that have been stir fried, roasted or baked rather than boiled.



## **MILK, CHEESE AND YOGURT**

**Serve three times a day. Toddlers need less milk than babies and you should aim to replace bottles with beakers and cups by your child's first birthday. One serving is:**

- About 100-120ml (3-4oz) glass or cup of milk.
- A 120g pot of full fat yogurt or fromage frais.
- Cheese in a sandwich or on top of a pizza slice.
- A serving of custard or another milk pudding made with whole milk.
- A serving of food in a white cheese sauce such as macaroni cheese.
- Some toddlers may continue with breastfeeds.
- A formula milk can be considered for toddlers with a poor food intake as it is higher in iron and some vitamins than cows' milk.



## **MEAT, FISH, EGGS, NUTS AND PULSES**

**Serve twice a day for toddlers who eat meat and fish and three times a day for vegetarians. Always serve a high vitamin C food with vegetarian meals to ensure good absorption of iron.**

- Most toddlers prefer softer cuts of meat such as chicken, minced meat, sausages, pate or slowly baked meat. Some will refuse hard, chewy textures.
- Serve oily fish such as mackerel, salmon and sardines in fish cakes or fish pie up to twice a week for girls and four times a week for boys.
- Vegetarian alternatives include eggs, ground or crushed nuts and pulses such as beans, chickpeas, hummus, lentils and dhal.
- High vitamin C foods include tomatoes, peppers, citrus fruits, kiwi, pineapple and fruit juices high in vitamin C.



## **OILS, BUTTER AND FAT SPREADS**

**Add some each day into food preparation.**

- Rapeseed oil is highest in omega 3 and is the best for cooking. Olive oil, soya oil, and walnut oil have a good balance of omega 3 and 6 fats.

## **SUGARY FOODS AND PACKET SNACKS**

- Toddlers over 2 years can have cake, biscuits or ice cream with fruit as a pudding once per day. Limit sweets, chocolate, fruit juices and other sweet drinks, crisps and other packet snacks to one item once per week.



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