

# PLANNING MEALS FOR TODDLERS

## GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS



A well planned menu will provide meals and snacks with foods from all the food groups. It will make budgeting and shopping for food quick and easy, and help you plan time for cooking and preparing food.

### Planning ahead

- Make a list of meals and snacks and/or stock up on nutritious foods so that you can put together a meal in minutes
- Save money by just buying the foods for nutritious meals and snacks in your menu plan
- Involve your toddler in planning, shopping and preparing food
- Include foods from each of the five food groups each day:
  - starchy foods at each meal and in some snacks
  - fruit and vegetables at all meals and in some snacks
  - milk, cheese and yogurt three times over the day
  - meat, fish, eggs, nuts or pulses two or three times each day (serve fish twice per week – one of which is oily fish)
  - use small amounts of oils, butter or fat spreads in food preparation.

### Suggestions for a good store of nutritious foods so that you can put together a meal in minutes

### Reducing food preparation time

- Cook a double or triple quantity of food and freeze the extra so that it can later be thawed in the fridge and then heated for a second or third meal
- Add leftover meat, fish or a tin of cooked lentils or beans to stir fried vegetables. They can be served with pasta, rice or noodles
- Add some extra raw or lightly cooked vegetables to a convenience meal
- Serve some fruit with yogurt, fromage frais or custard to make a nutritious second course. Once per day you can serve fruit with a small cake, biscuit, pudding or ice cream.

Cold meals can be just as nutritious as hot cooked meals and can be prepared quickly and easily using simple ingredients from the five food groups.

### Budgeting

- Fresh seasonal fruit, vegetables, meat and fish are usually cheaper than those out of season
- Frozen vegetables, fruit, meat and fish are often cheaper than fresh, especially when they are out of season
- Buy small amounts of foods high in fat and sugar, not multipacks
- Join the Healthy Start scheme if you are on a low income, and you will receive vouchers for fruit, vegetables and milk and coupons for free vitamin supplements:  
[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

CUPBOARDS			
Bread or bread rolls	Tinned sweet corn	Tinned fruit in water	Tinned tuna in water or oil
Breakfast muffins	Tinned tomatoes	Dried fruit	Tinned salmon in water or oil
Wraps/tortillas	Tomato based pasta sauces	Onions and garlic	Tinned baked beans
Pitta or naan breads	Tomato puree	Pesto	Lentils
Crackers, rice cakes or crisp bread	Selection of herbs and spices including oregano, bay leaves, cinnamon, ground ginger, ground cumin, ground coriander, turmeric		Dry or tinned chickpeas, or other pulses
Breadsticks	Potatoes	Honey/Syrup/Maple syrup	Ground or crushed nuts e.g. ground almonds
Breakfast cereals – fortified with iron and vitamins	Rice	Jam	Peanut butter
Oats or Ready Brek™	Pasta	Sugar	Marmite™/Vegemite™
Breadcrumbs	Couscous	Oils for cooking: rapeseed or soya	Stock cubes
		Oils for dressings and salads: olive, soya, walnut	
FRIDGE			
Milk	Carrots	Eggs	Stir fry noodles
Yogurt and fromage frais	Selection of other fresh vegetables	Sliced cold meat such as ham, chicken, turkey, beef	Butter and/or margarine
Cheese	Selection of fresh fruits	Fresh meat and fish	
Cream cheese	Lemons or limes	Meat pate	Mayonnaise
	Root ginger		
FREEZER			
Bread	Green beans	Spinach	Chicken – breasts or thighs
Bread rolls	Sweet corn	Mixed vegetables	Frozen fish fillets, fish cakes or fish fingers
Peas	Broccoli	Frozen summer berries	Ice cream

For personalised analysis of toddlers' food intake and activity levels, use the Infant & Toddler Forum's Tot It Up calculator [www.infantandtoddlerforum.org/toddler-food-calculator](http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org/toddler-food-calculator)

Additional copies of this Factsheet can be downloaded from [www.infantandtoddlerforum.org](http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org)



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