

MEALS, SNACKS AND DRINKS FOR TODDLERS GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS



Midday and evening meals may be hot or cold – offer two courses. Nutritious meals and snacks combine foods from Food Groups 1-5. Small amounts of foods from Food Group 5 are used in food preparation. To protect teeth, foods containing sugar 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 Oils, butter and fat spreads.

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 clementine segments.

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, fromage frais or custard. Once a day it could be a sweet 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.

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

Additional copies of this Factsheet can be downloaded from www.infantandtoddlerforum.org



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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*, nut butters, 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 for meals and snacks 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
- Alternative drinks to milk based on soya, nuts or cereals all contain sugar and should not be used unless they are fortified with calcium, iodine, vitamins A and B2
- Sweet drinks including fruit juices, smoothies, squashes and fizzy drinks can all damage teeth because they contain sugar and acid. If used they should be limited to once per week and served with a meal
- Diet fizzy drinks and sugar free squashes are acidic and will also damage teeth.