



HAPPY MEALTIMES WITH YOUR 1-5 YEAR OLD



Government of Bermuda
Department of Health and Family Services
Department of Health

BUILDING GOOD EATING HABITS

As a parent or caregiver, you are discovering that toddlers and preschoolers are very independent! As infants, you fed them when they were hungry and they ate what you gave them. Very simple.

NOW, FEEDING YOUR CHILD IS NOT SO SIMPLE!

Toddlers and preschoolers want to eat the same food three days in a row and the next day refuse to touch it! They refuse lunch, - but fifteen minutes later beg for a cookie. They insist on munching on crackers all afternoon, then pick at their dinner. What's going on here? During the toddler and preschool years your child is going through some very important changes:

INDEPENDENCE

They want to do more for themselves which is not easy. They still want the security of knowing you will always be there to help. Their struggle for independence often shows up in the way they eat. They may refuse to eat a certain food or refuse to eat at all. Don't worry, this is normal.

GROWTH

Now that they are older, your toddler or preschooler isn't growing as fast. Activity now plays an important role in their appetite and can cause appetite changes. It may be common for them to eat only one good meal a day, or even every other day.

HOW CAN YOU COPE?

These changes can be upsetting but the key is for you to relax. With your support and encouragement, your child will eat the food he/she needs for growth and development - without hassles or battles!



YOUR job is to decide:

- WHAT** food is offered.
- WHEN** the food is offered.
- WHERE** it will be eaten.








YOUR CHILD'S job is to decide:

- IF** he/she will eat or not.
- WHAT** he/she will eat from the food offered.
- HOW** much he/she will eat.

REMEMBER: It is very important to let your child do his/her job. This may seem very difficult to do, particularly if your child seems to be eating poorly. However, when young children eat poorly, the best way to help improve eating behaviors is to stick to your job of allowing your child to do their job.

WHAT SHOULD I FEED MY CHILD MEALS

Choosing the food to serve your child is a very important job. Try to plan meals that include choices from four or five of the following food groups:

GRAIN (Bread and Cereal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads • Crackers • Biscuits • Muffins • Pancakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noodles • Spaghetti • Rice • Cereal • Tortillas etc.
VEGETABLE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomatoes • Carrots • Green Beans • Peas • Squash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broccoli • Sweet Potatoes • Cauliflower • Spinach • Corn, etc.
FRUIT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oranges • Apples • Berries • Melons • Pears • Peaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bananas • Apricots • Grapefruit • Pineapple • Grapes • Fruit juice, etc.
MILK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Yogurt • Cheese • Cottage • Soy Milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custard • Ice cream • Frozen Yogurt • Pudding, etc.
MEAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veal • Fish • Peanut butter • Baked beans • Pinto beans • Kidney beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef • Pork • Eggs • Chicken • Turkey • Lamb, etc.

SNACKS

A CHILD'S STOMACH is small (about the size of his/her fist) and energy needs are high. A child can't get everything needed in just three meals. A snack between meals and perhaps after dinner is also necessary.

Choose snacks from foods in the Five Food Groups and serve with a beverage such as milk or juice.

SNACK IDEA

- Cheese and crackers
- Peanut butter on toast
- Cereal (iron-fortified) with milk
- Fruit and cheese
- Animal crackers and fruit

DESSERTS

WHEN YOU OFFER DESSERT, serve it along with the meal. Giving children dessert at the end of a meal makes it seem like a reward and teaches them that dessert is more important than the other food.

Dessert ideas

- Yogurt
- Fruit
- Graham crackers
- Pudding
- Animal crackers
- Ice cream

ENCOURAGE VARIETY

Vary the food you offer your child from each food group. For example, offer two or three different kinds of fruit during the day.

Try all kinds of food - even those that you don't like! Let your child decide what food he/she likes or dislikes.

HOW MUCH IS A SERVING?

Here are some ideas to help you decide how much of each food to offer your child:

Offer one-fourth to one-half of an adult serving size (for example, 1/2 or 1/4 of a sandwich).

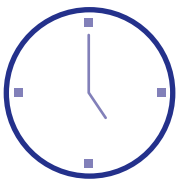
Start with these amounts and give your child more if he/she is still hungry. Your child may eat more or less.

DON'T WORRY_ trust your child's appetite.

If you would like more information on serving sizes, please see the back of this leaflet.

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD EAT?

Toddlers and preschoolers eat better when given meals and snacks at about the same times each day. Scheduled meals and snacks two and three hours apart will allow your child to eat only at these times.



FOR EXAMPLE:

BREAKFAST	7:00 a.m.
SNACK	10:00 am.
LUNCH	12:30 p.m.
SNACK	3:00 p.m.
DINNER	6:00 p.m.
SNACK	Before bedtime

Work out a meal and snack schedule that fits your daily routine so you and your child can eat together as much as possible.

Keeping the meal and snack schedule regular can be a tough job for parents, but will help your child eat better.

WHERE SHOULD MY CHILD EAT?

SERVE MEALS AND SNACKS AT THE TABLE

There is no reason for a toddler or preschooler to carry food or drink around the house. Insist that food be eaten at the table or another spot agreed on. This will keep your child from thinking that eating goes with watching TV or playing with toys.

MAKE MEALTIMES RELAXING AND ENJOYABLE

The mood in which food is served is also important. Provide your child with the meal and then sit back and enjoy your food. Let your child eat at his/her own pace and way. Turn off the TV! Talk about something besides food and eating; like what you did that day.

HABITS THAT BACKFIRE






- Fat is needed for young children to grow well. Children under the age of two should not be on low fat diets like some adults. Your child needs the energy provided by the fat in food or added fat like butter and oils.
- Pressuring, bribing, playing games or forcing your child to eat more. Usually makes them eat less.
- You can't expect your child to eat a variety of foods if you don't! Set a good example by eating many different kinds of food.

FOOD GUIDE FOR THE PRESCHOOLER

To be well nourished, your child needs foods from the Five Food Groups each day. Child-size servings are suggested, as it is best to offer small servings and let your child ask for more. Too large servings can be the beginning of over-eating and other feeding problems. An easy guide to minimum serving sizes for children is: **ONE TABLESPOON OF COOKED FOOD FOR EACH YEAR OF A CHILD'S AGE.**



SAMPLE MENU PATTERN

Food Group	Suggested daily servings	What counts as a serving
MEAT, FISH, POULTRY AND ALTERNATIVES  (eggs, dry beans, and peas, nuts, etc.)	2-3	1 ounce lean meat, fish or chicken 1 egg 1/4 cup cooked beans 1 tbsp peanut butter
MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS 	2-4	1/2 cup milk 4 ounces yoghurt 1/2 cup milk pudding 1 ounce cheese
VEGETABLES 	3-5	1/4 cup cooked 1/4 cup chopped raw 1/2 cup leafy raw 1/2 cup juice
FRUIT 	3-5	1/2 piece of small fruit 1/4 cup canned fruit in light syrup 1/8 cup dried fruit 1/4 cup juice
BREADS, CEREALS 	3-5	1/2 slice bread 1/2 cup ready-to-eat cereal 1/4 cup cooked cereal, rice, pasta
FATS, SWEETS 	3-5	Limit use

BREAKFAST	
1 FRUIT	1/4 cup orange juice
1 BREAD OR CEREAL	1/2 slice toast or 1/4 oatmeal
1 MEAT OR ALTERNATE	1 scrambled egg (optional)
1 MILK	1/2 milk
SNACK	
1 FRUIT	1/2 apple
LUNCH	
1 MEAT OR ALTERNATE	1 ounce tuna fish or 1/2 small cup chicken noodle soup
1 VEGETABLE	1 slice tomato
2 BREAD	1 slice bread
1 MILK	1/2 cup milk
1 FRUIT	1/2 cup fruit cocktail in lite syrup
SNACK	
1 FRUIT	1/4 cup juice or 1/2 apple
1 BREAD OR CEREAL	2 to 4 crackers
DINNER	
1 MEAT	1 ounce chicken
1 BREAD OR CEREAL	4 tbsp. rice or small dinner roll
2 VEGETABLES	2 tbsp. carrots or 2 tbsp. peas
1 MILK	1/2 cup milk or 1/2 cup yoghurt
SNACK	
1 MILK	1/2 cup milk
1 BREAD OR CEREAL	graham cracker or 1/2 cup cheerios

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL **NUTRITION SERVICES AT**
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