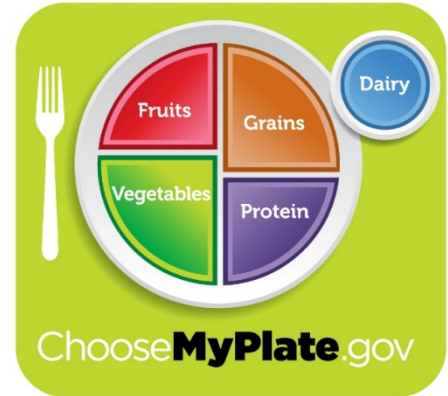


# Nutrition for Toddlers 1 Year and Older

Food can be broken into 5 different groups:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Grains
- Protein
- Dairy



When offering meals to your toddler try to aim for **at least 3 of the 5 food groups**. This will help ensure that your toddler is getting the essential nutrients they need for growth and development.

## What is an essential nutrient?

**Essential nutrients** are compounds found in food that the human body cannot produce by itself. Examples of these include, protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. This means the foods we eat are extremely important for growth, overall health, and disease prevention.

## Why is protein important?

Think of protein as a building block to growing up healthy and strong. Protein helps the body do many things, from growing taller to organ development.

## What food has protein?

- Meat, dairy, soy products, beans/legumes



**Meat products seem hard to chew, what are some soft protein options?**

- Fish, soft cooked chicken, meatballs, taco meat, ground turkey, scrambled eggs, peanut butter, tofu, cheese

**Why is fiber important?**

Fiber is important for overall health, protection from disease, and bowel regularity. Higher fiber intake is associated with a longer life.



**What foods have fiber?**

- Whole grains (such as whole wheat bread and oats), fruits, and vegetables



**Why is iron important?**

Iron is a component to every living cell in the body and is essential for overall health, growth and development.

**What food has iron?**

- Fortified cereals, poultry, meat, beans, tofu, dark green vegetables (such as spinach, turnip, and collard greens).



**Why is calcium important?**

Calcium is a nutrient that helps toddlers grow strong bones and teeth.

**What food has calcium?**

- Dairy products are the most common sources of calcium, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt



- Non-dairy sources include: dairy milk alternatives (almond milk, soy milk), spinach, kale, turnip greens, white beans, black eyed peas, tofu, fortified OJ, fortified cereals

### **What kind of milk can toddlers have and how much?**

- From ages 1-2 your toddler should drink whole milk  
After your child turns 2 years old it is recommended they drink low-fat milk such as skim or 1%.
- No more than 24 ounces of milk per day is recommended

### **What if I am still breastfeeding?**

- Typically, 3-4 servings of breast milk per day will reach a toddler's calcium goal

### **Why is vitamin A important?**

Vitamin A helps promote good eyesight and structure of many important cells in the body

### **What food has vitamin A?**

- Think of orange/yellow foods like sweet potatoes, carrots, bell peppers, and mangos when you think of vitamin A
- Other food options include leafy greens like spinach and fish like salmon



### **Why is vitamin C important?**

Vitamin C is important to overall health of skin, hair, and bones. It is a powerful antioxidant (substance that protects cells from damage) that can help your toddler fight off illnesses.

### **What food has vitamin C?**

- Oranges, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, strawberries, pineapple, kiwi, mango, berries (raspberries, blueberries, blackberries)
- Broccoli, cabbage, turnip greens, brussels sprouts, tomatoes, bell peppers, sweet potato, winter squash, now peas,



These nutrients and more help form the colors of the rainbow. Takeaway: “Eat the rainbow!”

### *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)*

#### **How often should my 1 year-old eat?**

- Toddlers typically eat 3 meals per day with 2-3 snacks like the rest of the family.

#### **What if I am still breast feeding?**

- Breastfeeding does not have to end just because your infant is now considered a toddler. Breast milk will continue to provide essential nutrients for development and immune support as long as you and your child desire.
- It is important to remember that **after 12 months of age** breastmilk will **no longer provide 100% of the nutrients a toddler needs**. This means offering a variety of table foods is just as important.

#### **What is still a choking hazard?**

- Large pieces of tough foods, such as hotdogs, steak, nuts, and whole grapes.
- The texture of the food your toddler eats will increase overtime. For example, at 12 months an animal cracker may be too difficult, but by 18 months your toddler may not have a problem with it. You know your toddler best so use your best judgement.

- To prevent choking, your child should always be sitting and supervised while eating.
- Take care when offering new foods, it is best to start with foods that are easily mashed or dissolved in the mouth.
- Always cut tougher foods into small pieces.

### **What if my toddler doesn't like a new food?**

- It can take many tries for toddlers to get used to something they don't like. Be patient, as it can take upwards of 7-10 tries before the toddler likes the new food.
- To promote meal acceptance, try to introduce one new food at a time, with 1-2 other foods your toddler already enjoys.
- Toddlers and children often learn by example, meaning eating healthy foods in front of your child will make the biggest long-term impact.

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