

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

RAISING A HEALTHY EATER (ONE TO FIVE YEARS)

MEAL AND SNACK ROUTINES ARE IMPORTANT

- Offer three meals and two to three snacks each day
- Leave two and a half to three hours between meals and snacks
- Offer only water between meals and snacks to help encourage a good appetite

YOU DECIDE

Where to eat – seated at the table for meals and snacks

When to eat – keep to the meal and snack routine. Avoid extra snacking

What to offer – Be mindful of their likes but do not cater to them

TRUST YOUR CHILD TO DECIDE

Which foods to eat - from the foods you offer

How much to eat – they will eat the right amount for their growth and activity needs

YOU ARE A ROLE MODEL AND HAVE AN IMPACT

- Take the time to enjoy mealtimes together
- Offer your child the same foods that you eat
- Serve foods family-style so they can pick which foods and how much from what is on the table



- Have pleasant conversation and avoid talking about how much or little they eat
- Put away toys and electronics (cell phones, tablets, TV) so the focus is on eating
- Your child may be messy when they eat. With time and practice, it will get better

Remember that your child will eat best if:

- Mealtimes are relaxed
- They do not feel pressured to eat
- Foods are easy to eat without help
- They are allowed to stop eating or leave the table when they are full

MEAL PLAN USING CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE

- Use the Food Guide plate to plan meals and snacks

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675
TTY 1-866-512-6228
york.ca/feedingkids

- Include foods from all food groupings (vegetables and fruit, whole grains and protein foods)
- Include a vegetable or fruit (or both) at meals and snacks and choose ones with different textures, colours and shapes
- Flavour food with herbs and spices instead of salt or sugar
- Offer small portions of easy to chew foods
- Rice rusks or food puffs are not part of Canada's Food Guide
- If your child does not eat what you offered, do not go back to the kitchen to get other food

Iron is important for growth and development

- Offer iron-rich foods two to three times each day
- Iron-rich foods include:
 - Legumes (kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas)
 - Soy products (tofu, edamame)
 - Eggs
 - Beef, dark meat chicken, turkey, pork, fish
 - Iron-fortified cereals
- Vitamin C (vegetables, fruit) helps absorb iron
- More than three cups (24 ounces or 750 mL) of milk can cause iron levels to go down

SOME FOODS ARE CHOKING RISKS

Avoid

- Hard, small and round foods (whole grapes, raw carrots, apples, nuts, fruit with pits, hot dogs)
- Smooth and sticky foods (nut butter by spoon)

Make these foods safer

- Cook and chop these foods
- Thinly spread peanut and nut butters

DRINKS MATTER

Milk

- Continue to breastfeed for as long as you and your child want
 - If breastmilk is offered, give a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU daily until two years



- If your child's milk source is not breastmilk, offer 3.25% M.F. cow's milk. At two years, switch to skim, 1% or 2% M.F.
- Your child only needs two cups (16 ounces or 500 mL) of milk each day
 - Offer ½ cup (four ounces or 125 mL) servings

Water and other beverages

- Offer water when your child is thirsty
- It is best to avoid juice and other beverages
- By 18 months, offer all beverages by open cup

BABY TEETH ARE IMPORTANT

- Help your child brush their teeth twice a day and floss once a day
- Help your child rinse their teeth with water when it is not possible to brush
- Take your child to their first dental visit by their first birthday. Routine check-ups are important

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information or additional nutrition resources and videos, visit york.ca/feedingkids or unlockfood.ca

To speak to a registered dietitian at no cost, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

To find out if your child is a healthy eater, visit nutritionscreen.ca and complete Nutri-eSTEP for toddlers or preschoolers.

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