

# Feeding Your Toddler

## 1 to 3 years

### Family Meals

- Eating together as a family at the table is just as important as the food eaten.
- By watching you, your toddler learns how to behave at the table and accept new foods. Keep toys, screens and other distractions away during family meals.
- Offer 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks at about the same time everyday. Toddlers do best with a routine.
- Your toddler's appetite will change from day to day. Let your toddler eat as much or as little as they want. It is the parent's job to choose which food and drinks to offer and it is the toddler's job to decide how much to eat and drink.
- When your toddler decides not to eat the family meal, there is no need to prepare other foods. Continue to offer one family meal even if your toddler is refusing to eat.
- Your toddler is eating enough if they are active and growing.



### Common Concerns

- Being picky with food is normal for a toddler. Continue to offer familiar foods along with new foods. Keep meal time pleasant by accepting that it is okay if your toddler refuses to eat.
- Someone needs to be with your child when they are eating or drinking. Be aware of foods that can cause choking such as nuts, popcorn, hard candies, whole grapes, hot dogs and hard vegetables and fruit.
- If your child has constipation offer water often and high fibre foods such as whole grains, vegetables, fruit, beans and lentils. Consult with your Health Care Provider if constipation continues.

### Healthy Foods and Drinks

- It is recommended to continue breastfeeding for up to 2 years and beyond. Continue to give 10 µg (400 IU) of vitamin D per day until age 2 while receiving breastmilk.
- Formula is no longer needed after 12 months of age.
- When whole cow's or goat's milk is introduced provide 500 ml (2 cups) per day and no more than 750 ml (3 cups) per day. Low fat cow's milk and soy, rice, or other plant-based beverages are not recommended in the first two years of life.
- Offer water to satisfy thirst. There is no need to provide juice or other sugary beverages. Never put your toddler to bed with a bottle; liquids other than water can cause tooth decay.
- Offer water or milk in a cup without a lid. Your toddler should be drinking from an open cup and no longer using a bottle by 18 months.
- Use Canada's Food Guide to plan family meals and snacks. Taking the time to plan and prepare meals teaches your toddler how to eat well.
- Be aware that foods marketed to children are often higher in sugar, fat and salt and are not needed.
- Toddlers do not need low fat or diet products; they need regular nutritious food to grow.
- Avoid using food and beverages to bribe, reward or discipline your toddler.



### For more information

Contact your local Public Health Office  
Please visit the Public Health website at:  
[www.gnb.ca/healthypeople](http://www.gnb.ca/healthypeople)

