



## FEEDING TIPS FOR TODDLERS

Children go through many stages as they grow. Their eating habits are often affected by these stages. The years between 1 and 5 can be a very busy period of learning, so there are times when eating does not interest them.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP MAKE FEEDING A TODDLER EASIER:

- **Have regular meals and snacks.**  
(Give your toddler 3 meals a day, with planned snacks so they eat every 2 to 3 hours). With regular feeding, your toddler will have time to get hungry, and will be more likely to eat well.
- **Make meal times pleasant.**  
Let your toddler take their time eating, but let them leave the table when they show they've had enough food. (Don't make them eat when they're not hungry).
- **Most toddlers don't like new foods!**  
Let them look at a new food, and then taste it. Eventually, they'll want to eat it. Studies show that it takes 8 to 15 tastes for a new food to become familiar. Other experiences with the food and seeing people eat the new food speeds the process of acceptance.
- **Make one meal for the whole family.**  
Include a variety of foods with bread because toddlers usually eat it. Let your child decide what to eat. If they don't eat much, don't worry. They'll make up for it another day. Short order cooking is not the solution.
- **Know they will eat very small amounts of food.**  
Their portion sizes are one fourth the size of an adult's. They can get by on an ounce of meat, or 1 to 2 tablespoons of vegetables for a serving.

- **Don't give too much juice and milk.**  
Your toddler only needs 16 ounces of milk, and up to 8 ounces of juice a day. More milk or juice will fill them up, and they won't be hungry for meals. Too much juice and juice drinks have been shown to actually slow growth because little room is left in a tiny stomach for solid foods. Fruit juices are never to be served in a bottle and can be given to children when they are able to drink from a cup (about 9 months). Children under 4 can be given juice 2 to 4 ounces at a time, up to 8 ounces a day.
- **Help your toddler be successful in eating.**  
Give them foods that are easy to pick up and chew (like small sandwiches, dry cereal, pieces of fruit).
- **Keep your child safe while eating - to make sure they don't choke:**
  - be there during feedings
  - keep your child seated while they eat (most choking happens if kids are lying down, running, jumping, or playing while eating)
  - keep things calm at meal time
  - cut foods into bite-sized pieces
  - watch out for foods that can cause choking: nuts, raw carrots, jelly beans, hot dogs and grapes

Feeding a toddler can be a real challenge. But, it can also be lots of fun! Remember, it's your responsibility to make and serve the food, but it's your child's responsibility to eat it according to their appetite!

*Adapted from "How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much" by Ellen Satter.*



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