

Trust ME . Trust MY tummy.

Raising a healthy eater (1 to 5 years)

Meal and snack routines are important.

- Offer 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks each day.
- Leave 2-1/2 to 3 hours between meals and snacks.
- Offer only water between meals and snacks to help encourage a good appetite.

You decide:

Where to eat - Try eating at the table for meals and snacks whenever possible.

When to eat - Keep to a meal and snack routine to avoid grazing through the day.

What to offer - Be mindful of your child's likes and dislikes 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.

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 your child can decide which foods they want to eat in the amount they need from what is provided.
- 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.

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 eat foods in any order they choose. No need to finish one before another.
- 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
Canada.ca/FoodGuide

Southwestern Public Health

St. Thomas Site
1230 Talbot Street
St. Thomas ON

Woodstock Site
410 Buller Street
Woodstock, ON

1-800-922-0096 | www.swpublichealth.ca

- Include foods from all food groupings (vegetables and fruit, whole grains and protein foods).
- Include vegetables 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 and 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 and fruit) helps absorb iron.
- More than three cups (24 ounces or 750mL) 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, chop or grate 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 500mL) of milk each day. Offer 1/2 cup (4 ounces or 125mL) 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 family nutrition information, visit: swpublichealth.ca/feedingkids and 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.

Adapted with permission from York Region Community and Health Services.