

## Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

### Developing Healthy Eating Habits

- Start with age-appropriate servings, as listed in the chart on the next page.
- Teach her to eat slowly. Ask if she is still hungry before allowing her to serve herself more food. Taking the time to decide if she is hungry or full will help her pay attention to important cues from her body.
- Avoid requiring your child to clean his plate. Help him learn to eat based on how hungry he is, not on how much food is still on his plate.
- Understand your role and your child's. Your job is to offer a variety of healthy foods at regular meal times; her job is to decide what and how much to eat.
- Be a positive role model. Sit with your child and let him observe you eat a healthy, balanced diet. Serve yourself appropriate portions and try “new” foods. Explain what you are doing.
- Pay attention to your toddler's hunger cues. She may not say that she is full, but may start playing, become distracted, shake her head “no,” close her mouth or refuse to finish the food on her plate.
- Complaints of being hungry, especially when a child has just eaten, may be due to other triggers such as boredom, TV advertising or seeing another person eating.
- Given healthy servings, most toddlers sense when they are full and will stop eating if you let them. The amount of food a toddler eats may change from day to day, but a healthy child will generally consume just the right amount of food to nourish his body.

### Trying New Foods

It is natural for your toddler to be cautious with new foods. It may take 5 – 20 tries before he will come to like it. Minimize the struggles of introducing new foods by:

- Alternating bites between a new food and a food your child is familiar with and likes.
- Encouraging children to try new foods. Begin by putting a very small portion on your child's plate (e.g., two peas). However, do not force her to finish more than she wants.
- Avoiding rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with food. Especially avoid forcing a child to finish the “healthy foods” to get dessert or sweets—this can make the healthy food seem like punishment and cause him to eat when he is full.

### How Much to Feed Your Child

Understand your role and your child's role at mealtimes. Your job is to offer healthy foods at regular times; your child's job is to decide whether and how much to eat.

*Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about feeding your toddler.*

### Choking Hazards

Do not feed children younger than four years of age round, firm food unless it is chopped completely.

**The following foods are choking hazards:**

- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of cheese or meat (e.g., hot dogs)
- Whole grapes, chunks of hard fruit (e.g., apples) and raw vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Ice cubes
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy, chewing gum

\*Never leave a young child unattended while she/he is eating.

## Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH/ SUPPER	SNACK
	Serve first 3 components	Serve all 4 components	Select 2 of the 4 components
1. Milk, fluid (Age 1, whole; Age 2, fat-free or 1% low-fat)	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
2. Fruit or Vegetable	1/4 cup	Serve 2 or more separate fruit/vegetable dishes: 1/4 cup total (2 Tbsp each)	1/2 cup
3. Grain or Bread			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1/2 slice
Grain or Pasta	—	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Cereal – Dry	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Cereal – Hot	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
4. Meat or Meat Alternate (protein source)			
Lean meat, poultry/fish	1/2 oz	1 oz	1/2 oz
Cheese	1/2 oz	1 oz	1/2 oz
Cottage cheese	2 Tbsp	1/4 cup	2 Tbsp
Large egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg
Cooked dry beans/peas	—	1/4 cup	2 Tbsp
Peanut butter/other nut/seed butters	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	1 Tbsp
Nuts or seeds	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1/2 oz
Yogurt, plain or flavored	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/4 cup

### Age-Appropriate Drink Servings for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years



#### Milk

4 oz (1/2 cup) serving shown in a 9 oz cup:

- Whole milk for age 1
- Fat-free or 1% (low-fat) for age 2



#### Juice

4 oz (1/2 cup) serving shown in a 9 oz cup –100% juice

## Tip Sheet: Healthy Eating for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

### Age-Appropriate Servings for Lunch/Supper for Toddlers Ages 1 through 2 Years

#### Grain/Bread

1/4 cup serving shown

#### Meat/Meat Alternate

1 oz serving shown



#### Fruit/Vegetable

1/4 cup total (2 Tbsp each)

Lunch/Supper  
shown on 8" plate.  
Add milk to complete  
the meal requirements.