



Toddler feeding tips that work

What to eat

- Be sure to offer your newly independent eater foods from all the food groups each day. You can make exploring new foods easier by serving them along with what they already like.
- Your Toddler needs three small meals and two to three snacks a day to help get all the nutrition they need. Toddlers get around 1/3 of their calories from snack time, so provide healthy choices and avoid high-calorie, low-nutrient foods, like chips, cookies and sugary drinks.
- Toddlers need calories from fat for growth and brain development. After your toddler switches from breastmilk or formula to cow's milk, you should start making foods with one tablespoon of soy or canola oil, or use salad dressing as a dip. Fatty fish, avocado, and other foods made with vegetable oils are all great choices.
- Their food might taste bland to you, but remember, they don't need all the salt that tastes right for your tastebuds. Hold back on adding salt to their meals for now.

What to drink

- Hydration is important, but too many liquids can make your little one too full to eat. What they do drink should be a healthy choice like a nutritious toddler drink, milk, [100% juice](#), water or juice-and-water blends without added sweeteners.
- Some good limits are 2 cups of milk a day, and only ½ a cup of fruit juice. [Water](#) should make up the rest of their fluids.
- Even if you give your toddler a [nutritious toddler drink](#) to help fill nutrition gaps after switching from breastmilk, make sure you give them a variety of healthy foods.

Mealtime decision making

- A tried and true recipe for healthy eating habits starts with important jobs for you and your toddler —you decide on the meal time and foods that are offered while your toddler decides on what foods and how much to eat. When offering a new food, serve alongside some of their favorites so your little one can still make choices.
- Your tot will do as you do, especially when it comes to vegetables. They'll learn that veggies are yummy by watching you love every bite.
- Avoid using food as a reward. This can backfire and create negative associations with certain foods. Food rewards usually distract your little one from the foods you actually want them to try.
- Try reasoning with them (within reason). Explain that eating breakfast will fuel their play time. But stay calm and don't push it. If your toddler just won't eat—move on and chances are she'll be hungry and ready the next time.
- Have them help prepare meals with you.

Mealtime moods

- Try having family meals away from the TV and without phones.
- Be realistic about how long your Toddler will sit still. Try to keep them engaged in conversation, but at this age they they may not last the whole meal.
- Keep mealtime light and relaxed. More high-pressure atmospheres can create picky eating.
- Give them a developmentally appropriate chair and utensils. Mealtime is just more fun when they can do it themselves.

Talk to your doctor

If you're really worried about your Toddler not eating enough or too many mealtime struggles—have a conversation with your child's pediatrician. They'll have a record of your little one's growth and be able to make specific recommendations for your needs.