

# Nutrition For Toddlers & Pre-Schoolers

## McKenzie Pediatrics (2009)

What should I expect about my toddler's eating habits?

- The rapid growth of an infant slows after the first birthday. Their appetite drops off.
- An infant uses 27% of their daily calorie intake for growth...a toddler uses 3%.
- A toddler's food intake is often erratic and unpredictable. Most toddlers eat only 1 or 2 "good" meals a day, and they begin to need more light (healthy) snacks.
- Most toddlers go through food jags, wanting only a certain food or foods every meal
- Most toddlers become "finicky" or "picky", eating smaller quantities of food. Amazingly, they almost always seem to grow just fine!

What mistakes might I make in feeding my toddler?

- Don't ask them to choose what they want. Don't become a "short-order-cook". Instead offer health foods at every meal, and certainly choose peanut butter or macaroni & cheese for them on occasion!
- Don't make them something they want after they've turned their noses up at the meal you've already made for your family. Of course, they'll soon hold out for this!
- Don't offer bribes.
- Don't apologize. Simply say "this is what I've made for dinner" and "eat what you want and don't eat what you don't want".

How Many Daily Calories Are Needed For My Young Child?

- A simple formula is 40 calories per inch of height. Children usually need less, and receive more, than parents think!

How Much Fat Does A Young Child Need In Their Diet?

- Focus on canola, corn, safflower, & olive oils in your cooking. Avoid margarine and shortening (which have Trans-Fatty Acids, harmful to brain development), and avoid "partially hydrogenated vegetable oils".
- Whole milk until age 2, then 2% milk until age 5, then 1% milk after age 5.

How Much Fiber Should I Be Giving My Young Child?

- Children need fiber in the amount of: (Years of Age +5) grams per day.
- Good sources include: beans (most all kinds), lentils, pears, apples, grapes, nectarines, peaches, plums, pineapples, raisins, dates, baked sweet potatoes, whole wheat pasta, peas, tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, green beans, and carrots.

What Are Good Iron Sources For My Child?

- 50% of American children do not receive enough daily iron in their diet!
- Sources include: lean beef, lamb, eggs, sardines, fortified cereals, spinach & other dark green leafy vegetables, wheat germ, fortified breads, egg noodles, beans and peas.

How Much Calcium Is Needed For Toddlers & Pre-Schoolers?

- 12-16 ounces per day of milk supplies the daily calcium needed after age 1 year. Perhaps more importantly, though, is daily activity and exercise to build healthy bones!
- Other calcium-rich foods include: yogurt, cheese, oatmeal, fortified juices, sardines, broccoli, tofu, and dark green leafy vegetables.

#### What Other Nutrients Are Important For My Child?

- Zinc: most children receive too little, but *avoid zinc supplements in children!* Good food sources include lean beef, lamb, turkey, dark chicken, egg yolks, yogurt, milk, hard cheese, natural peanut butter, whole-wheat breads, beans and peas.
- Folate: good sources include spinach, beans, bread, OJ, broccoli, and dark green lettuces.
- Vitamin A: good sources include sweet potatoes, carrots, milk, broccoli, spinach, cantaloupe, dried apricots, and eggs.
- Vitamin C: good sources include kiwi, oranges, sweet peppers, cantaloupe, broccoli, strawberries, and tomatoes.
- Biofavanoids: good sources include red grapes, canola/sunflower oils, nuts and seeds, avocado, peas, apples, and string beans.

#### What Are Other Important Facts For Good Nutrition?

- Minimize fruit juice consumption to less than 4 oz per day under age 12 months, and less than 6 oz per day after 1 year.
- Avoid "sweetened" fruit juices and sodas...buy only 100% fruit juices.
- Water can be limitless.
- Strongly consider a daily multivitamin for your child, especially if they are "picky".
- Be the role model, at the market and at the dinner table.
- Eat as a family, and Turn Off The TV!
- Encourage your children to be physically active.
- Fast food should be limited to no more than once per week.
- Allow a child to help with meal preparation.
- In toddlers, avoid chokable foods: popcorn, nuts, raw hard veggies, hard candy, whole grapes, hot dog pieces. Never allow any eating or any food while walking or running.
- Add eye appeal...cut foods into interesting shapes, or create smiley faces on top of foods using cheese, vegetables or fruits.
- Offer child-size portions: 1 tablespoon per year of age. Let them ask for more.

#### What Are Some Healthy Snack Ideas?

- Fresh fruits (canned ok if light syrup). Set out red grapes to munch on all day.
- 100% fruit juices (especially Orange, Red Grape, and Pineapple Juices)
- Raw Vegetables (after age 3): Baby Carrots, Broccoli, Zucchini, Cucumbers... with dips!
- Whole-Wheat Fig Bars, Animal Crackers, Graham Crackers, Vanilla Wafers
- English Muffins, Bagels
- Low-fat Yogurt, Frozen Yogurt, String Cheese, Cottage Cheese
- Zucchini or Carrot Oatmeal Bread
- Baked Pretzels, Baked Tortilla Chips, Baked Potato Chips (esp. Sweet Potatoes)
- Angel Food Cake with Fresh Strawberries
- Sugar-Free Popsicles
- Vegetable Soup