



Tiny Turns

A short guide to healthy eating for one-to-fives

Contents

- 1 ...and they're off!
- 2 Go for variety
- 4 Milky matters
- 6 Vitamins and iron
- 8 Veggie kids
- 9 Active kids
- 10 Nourishing nibbles
- 12 Drinks
- 14 Magic mealtimes
- 15 Safe tums
- 16 Fussy eaters
- 17 How to cope



...and they're off!

What your little one eats plays an important part in keeping them happy and healthy, as well as growing and developing properly. Between the ages of one and five, children grow very quickly and become more active. By now they'll be joining in with family meals and it's a great time for them to learn about food.

*This little guide
will help get them
off to a good start.*

Go for variety

The best way to make sure your child gets all the nutrients and energy they need is to give them a wide variety of foods from **the four main food groups**.

Food group	Examples	Quantity	Key nutrients	Tips
Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates	Bread, breakfast cereals, potatoes, pasta, rice, noodles, chapattis and yams	At least one serving with each meal and as some snacks	Carbohydrate B vitamins Fibre	Small portions of these foods make great snacks Give a mixture of white, brown and wholegrain varieties
Fruit and vegetables	All fresh, frozen and tinned fruit (in natural juice) and vegetables (in unsalted water) and dried fruit	Aim towards 5 'child-sized' portions a day One portion is about the amount they can fit in the palm of their hand (or 40g)	Vitamins - especially vitamin C Dark green vegetables provide some iron Fibre	Dried fruit should be kept to mealtimes only as it has higher concentration of sugar that can contribute to the development of tooth decay Vegetables can be easily added to soups and stews. Or some children prefer to eat their vegetables raw
Milk, cheese and yogurt	Milk, hard cheese, yogurt, fromage frais	3 portions of dairy a day: 100-120ml (small glass) milk, 60g-80g of yogurt, or 2-3 tablespoons (15g) of grated hard cheese	Calcium Protein Phosphorus Iodine	Milk can be used in custard, milk puddings, sauces and soups Try yogurt as a pudding or snack
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins	Meat, poultry (e.g. chicken, turkey), fish (e.g. tuna, fish fingers), eggs, nuts*, pulses (e.g. peas, baked beans, chickpeas, lentils) and soya products such as tofu	Try to provide 2 servings each day for young children. Vegetarian children should be offered 2-3 servings of alternative protein sources every day	Protein Iron (especially red meat and liver**) Other important vitamins and minerals including zinc and vitamin B ₆	Even small amounts of meat are useful to help keep iron levels topped up Lean meat, tinned salmon, tuna, peanut butter*, houmous and eggs all make ideal sandwich fillings

*Nuts

- **Safety:** children under five should not be given whole nuts because of the risk of inhaling and choking.
- **Peanut allergy:** as long as there is no history of food or other allergies in your

family, you can give your toddler peanuts, if they are crushed or ground into peanut butter. Otherwise if your child already has a known allergy or there is a history of allergy in your

child's immediate family (either parent or sibling) you should speak to your healthcare professional before you give peanuts or foods containing peanuts for the first time.

**Liver

- If you give liver or liver products to your child, they should be given no more than once a week.

Milky matters

Milk is an important food for young children. It contains many nutrients, providing:

- Calcium and protein for growth and development of children's bones
- Vitamins B2, B5 and B12
- Iodine, phosphorus and potassium

Try to give your child at least 350ml of milk a day or two servings of foods made from milk, such as cheese, yogurt or fromage frais.

Cow's milk can be introduced into the diet on cereal, in soups and in mashed potatoes.

Between the ages of one and two, it's recommended that you give your toddler whole milk to drink rather than skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk. Whole milk will provide more fat soluble vitamins. This goes for whole yogurt and cheese too!

You may choose to continue giving your baby breastmilk alongside family foods for as long as you and your baby want.

From two years, you can start to introduce semi-skimmed milk if your child is eating a good variety of foods and growing well. Otherwise, stick to whole milk. 1% and skimmed milk don't provide enough fat soluble vitamins or energy for under 5s.

If your child doesn't like to drink milk, try to offer other dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt. You can also add milk to dishes such as custard, milk puddings, fresh fruit milkshakes, sauces and soups.

Milk allergy

Milk allergy is not as common as people think – affecting about 1 in 50 infants, and is much less common in older children (most children outgrow their allergy).

If you think your child is allergic to milk, you should consult your GP. If a milk allergy is diagnosed, the GP will refer you to a Registered Dietitian for specialist advice.

Vitamins and iron

Tiny tumms need small, nutrient packed meals

One-to-fives need to get lots of nutrients and energy from their food because they grow and develop quickly. But small children only have tiny tumms and can't usually cope with big meals. This means that the foods they eat have to provide energy and nutrients in a compact form.

Fibre

For young children, especially those under two, the high-fibre foods recommended for adults don't fit the bill. Some toddlers may get diarrhoea with too much fibre. Little ones who eat a very high-fibre diet can also become full before they've had all the energy and nutrients they need.

Vitamins

The Department of Health recommends that all children aged one to five should be given a daily vitamin supplement containing vitamins A, C and D. Vitamin supplements are available under the Healthy Start Scheme, ask your Health Visitor for details.

Iron

Young children need some iron-providing foods every day. Iron is important for making red blood cells, which carry oxygen around the body. A lack of iron can lead to iron deficiency anaemia.

Red meat and some oily fish provide iron to the diet. The iron in plant foods such as pulses and bread is not as easy for the body to absorb. Foods which contain vitamin C (e.g. citrus fruits, peppers and some leafy green veg) can help increase absorption of iron so it's a good idea to include these in the same meal. This is particularly important for vegetarian children. Tea and coffee may reduce iron absorption and are not suitable for young children.

Where can I get iron?

Red meat and meat products (e.g. beef, lamb, pork)

Liver*

Chicken and turkey (especially the dark meat)

Other foods that provide iron

Breakfast cereals with added iron

Bread with added iron

Pulses (e.g. baked beans and lentils)

Dried fruit like apricots and raisins

Dark green leafy vegetables

*It is recommended that liver or liver products are given to children no more than once a week.

Veggie kids



A **vegetarian diet** can be a healthy one for young children but it takes careful planning to make sure that the nutrients usually found in meat are provided from other foods.

As **red meat is a good source of iron**, it's particularly important to include plenty of alternatives such as pulses and fortified bread and breakfast cereals (along with vitamin C-rich foods to help absorption - see page 7 for examples). Meat also provides other minerals, vitamins and protein which is also good to be aware of.

A **veggie diet** can be quite filling for a small child, so low-fibre, nutritious choices such as eggs, cheese and milk will help meet your child's nutrient needs.

If your child is vegan, ask your GP to refer you to a Registered Dietitian for specialist advice.

Active kids



Under-fives should be physically active for three hours every day, and not be inactive for long periods, (except when they're sleeping, of course!).

Being inactive is not good for our health, including our little ones! Encourage them to reduce their screen time (watching TV etc), and to walk and move more, and to not sit for too long.

For very little ones (under 2 years) include light activities such as:

- standing up
- moving around
- walking
- playing with toys

When your little one is more confident at walking, they can try more energetic activities. These types of activities should make kids "huff and puff" and can include organised activities, such as gymnastics. Other types of energetic activities include:

- active play
- swimming
- running around
- climbing frame
- dancing
- skipping rope

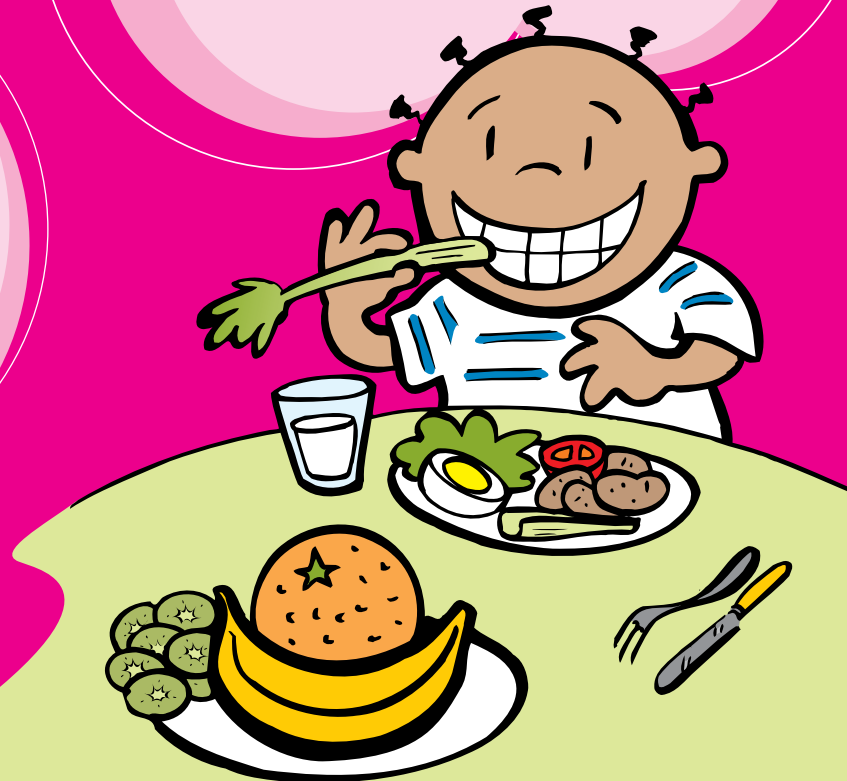
Nourishing nibbles

Between-meal snacks provide an important nutrient and energy top-up for small children. Nourishing nibbles include:

- Small sandwiches (filled with grated cheese, egg, tuna or lean meat)
- Fingers of toast with cheese spread or houmous
- Plain yogurt or fromage frais with added fruit
- Sliced or chopped fruit (e.g. apples, pears, bananas and grapes)
- Raw vegetables, sliced or cut into sticks (e.g. carrots, tomato and cucumber)
- Toasted muffin or bagel
- Sticks of cheese
- Rice cakes, bread sticks or oat cakes
- Small bowl of breakfast cereal and milk
- Scones, crumpets or pancakes

Keep snacks tooth-friendly by keeping them sugar-free.

Try not to give too many snacks as this may not leave enough room for main meals.



Drinks

Milk and water are good choices for young children. Milk provides key nutrients such as protein, calcium, potassium and a number of B vitamins.

New guidelines recommend reducing sugar intake by limiting sugary drinks and fruit juices. If you choose to give your child fruit juice **it should always be well diluted**, given in a cup and at mealtimes only.



Squashes and other **soft drinks** are not recommended. Not only are they bad news for teeth (even the 'diet' versions), their nutrient content is very low too. Toddlers who drink them frequently can have less room to eat well at mealtimes. **Fizzy drinks should be avoided.**

It's also best not to give young children tea or coffee, especially with food, as this may interfere with iron absorption.

*By the age of one, your child should be using a cup or beaker for their drinks. Prolonged bottle drinking is **not recommended.***

Magic mealtimes

- Use brightly coloured, child-sized cups, plates and cutlery.
- Present the food in an attractive, toddler-friendly way - make it interesting and colourful.
- Try to eat together - sit at the table with your child and have something yourself.
- Turn off all distractions, mealtime isn't screen time!
- Let your child help with simple food preparation or laying the table - they'll love feeling involved.
- Try not to get too wound up if your child makes a mess. It's all part of learning about food!
- Encourage new foods and don't worry if they are rejected, just try again another day.



Safe turns

Avoid

- Rice drinks (they may contain too much arsenic)
- Raw or partly cooked eggs that don't have the red lion mark
- Shark, marlin and swordfish
- Unwashed fruit and veg
- Raw fish



Fussy eaters

It's very common for young children to go through phases of being fussy about what they eat - sometimes eating very little, refusing to eat certain foods at all (even ones they previously liked) or wanting to eat the same thing day after day.



As stressful as this can be, it's rarely harmful. In fact, fussy eating is a normal part of growing up and showing independence.

How to cope

- Try to keep calm! Best not to make the dinner table a battleground.
- Eat together, the best way for children to learn to eat and enjoy new foods is to copy you.
- Keep portions small at first and praise your child for eating.
- If after gentle encouragement, your child refuses to eat something, just remove it without a fuss.
- Don't leave meals until your child is too hungry or too tired to eat or give too many snacks between meals.
- Try not to use food as a reward, it can lead to labelling foods as 'good' or 'bad'.
- Children sometimes get thirst and hunger mixed up and don't realise they are hungry.
- If your child has a friend who is a good eater, invite them round for tea; children can learn well from the good example set by peers.
- Children's tastes change - a food which they once refused may be their new favourite next week! Try serving new foods along with old favourites.
- Mix up the form that you offer a food in. A child might refuse cooked veg but may love the raw, grated version.

Remember, these phases do pass! But if you are worried about your child's eating habits talk to your GP or Health Visitor.

Information sources

NHS Choices. Physical activity guidelines for children (under 5 years)

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/physical-activity-guidelines-children-under-five-years/> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Drinks and cups for babies and young children

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/drinks-and-cups-for-babies-and-young-children/> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. What to feed young children

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/what-to-feed-young-children/> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Vitamins for children

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/weaning-and-feeding/vitamins-for-children/> [accessed 01/2021]

NHS Choices. Vegetarian and vegan diets Q&A

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/vegetarian-and-vegan-diets-q-and-a/> [accessed 01/2021]

BDA Healthy eating for Children: Food Fact Sheet

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/healthy-eating-for-children.html> [accessed 01/2021]

First Steps Nutrition Trust: Eating well in the early years

<https://www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years> [accessed 01/2021]



For details on additional information sources please contact Dairy UK

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