

Guide to Toddler Feeding: Portion Sizes and Meal Planning

It is normal to feel stressed when your toddler eats less than you might expect them to. Your toddler may want certain foods more than others. Sometimes they will avoid certain foods all together. Your toddler may eat a lot one day and then very little the next.

You know your toddler best! Use this guide for helpful tips for feeding your toddler.

What can affect how much my toddler eats?

Many things can affect your toddler's appetite, including:

- How active they are
- How much they ate earlier in the day
- How close their last meal, snack, or drink was
- Stress related to meal times
- Gastrointestinal (GI)/stomach issues or can't poop

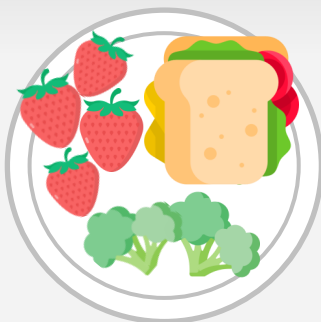
Did you know...



A toddler's stomach is only as big as their fist!



Feeding your toddler: Your role vs. your child's role



How much **you think** your toddler needs to eat



How much your toddler **knows they need to eat**

As the parent, you are responsible for deciding:



What your child will eat



When your child will eat



Where your child will eat

At mealtime, your child is responsible for deciding:



How much to eat

Helpful tips



Encourage your child to feed themselves! It is okay if they don't finish everything on their plate. The goal is to promote a good eating experience for them!

Recommended Food Groups and Portion Sizes

Food group	Total servings (per day)	Each portion size would be:
Milk/Dairy	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup milk, 1/2 cup yogurt, or 1/2 ounce cheese • *Whole milk for toddlers age 1
Protein	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-3 tablespoons beef, pork, poultry, or fish • 2-4 tablespoons beans or chopped nuts • 1 small egg
Grains	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/4 - 1/2 sliced bread, bagel, or bun • 1/3 - 1/2 cup ready-to-eat cereal or 1/4 - 1/2 cooked cereal • 1/4 - 1/3 cup rice or pasta
Veggies	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/4 - 1/3 cup cooked, canned, or fresh chopped veggies
Fruits	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 small fruit or 1/3 - 1/2 cup of berries • 1/4 - 1/3 cup cooked, canned, or fresh chopped fruit
Fats and Oils	3	1 teaspoon added butter, margarine, or oil.
Water	Offer water at meals and throughout the day. Minimum one cup each day.	

Treat every meal or snack as an “eating opportunity” for your child.

A good length of time for meals is no more than 30-40 minutes. For snacks, 20-30 minutes.

Here is a sample menu!



Breakfast: 3/4 cup oatmeal, 2 tablespoons raisins, 1/2 cup milk.

Morning snack: 1/2 peanut butter and jelly sandwich: 1 slice whole wheat bread, 1 tablespoon peanut butter, 1 teaspoon jelly, 1 mandarin orange, 1/2 cup water.

Lunch: 1 slice of cheese, 1/2 cup steamed carrots, 1 small banana, 1/2 cup milk, 1/2 cup water.

Afternoon snack: 1/2 cup yogurt, 1/4 granola, 1/4 cup strawberries, 1/2 cup water.

Dinner: 1/4 cup of chicken, 2 tablespoons green beans, 1/4 cup mashed potatoes, 1 small whole grain dinner roll, 1 teaspoon butter, 1/2 cup whole milk.

Evening snack: 5 whole grain crackers, 1/2 cup water.