

Feeding



You decide what foods, your toddler decides how much.

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From 12 months of age, toddlers should eat family meals. Offer a range of nutritious foods from the five food groups recommended by the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Be guided by your child – don't force them to eat if they aren't hungry, and don't withhold healthy food when they are.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Many toddlers can be fussy eaters. Factors that can affect your toddler's appetite include activity levels, sleeping patterns and health.
- As long as your toddler is active, well and eating a variety of healthy foods, there is no reason for concern.
- This is a time of exploration and learning for your toddler, so expect some mess and use surfaces that are easy to clean.

REALITIES

- There may be times your toddler will eat foods, and then refuse the same foods the next day.
- It may take many tries before they will accept new foods.
- It's common for toddlers to throw food. They may be testing your reactions.
- This is a time for experimenting with the feel and smell of food, or what sound it makes when dropped. Some toddlers can drag out mealtime.

MEALTIME TIPS

- Let your toddler know ahead of time that the meal will be ready soon.
- Sit down together when eating, preferably at a table with the family. Mealtimes provide an opportunity to be with your child and role model positive eating habits.
- Try to keep mealtimes regular and predictable.
- Make your toddler's evening meal early to avoid being over tired.
- Involve your toddler in preparing their meals.
- Encourage your toddler to taste new foods by offering their favourites in combination with new foods.
- Allow time for your toddler to touch and smell their food.
- Praise your child for trying new foods, eating finger foods, using a spoon or waiting their turn.
- Reduce distractions like television and electronic devices.
- Try to limit their eating time to 30 minutes in order to establish a routine.
- Avoid take away or pre-packaged foods that contain high levels of salt and fat.
- Avoid using sweets or chocolate as rewards.
- Toddler milks are not required.
- Avoid large amounts of milk, juice and cordial as this will fill them up, and affect their appetite.