

Feeding Your Toddler

Responsibilities

Feeding your toddler is an adventure! As a caregiver, you have three responsibilities in the feeding process:

- **What** food is served
- **When** food is served
- **Where** food is served

Your toddler is responsible for:

- How much of the food they eat
- Whether they eat any of it at all



Switching from a Bottle to a Cup

- Your toddler should be using a cup by one year of age.
- Offer a small amount of liquid in a cup. Help your toddler practice bringing the cup to their mouth and drinking.
- When your toddler can drink the smaller amounts, start adding more liquid to the cup. Keep in mind that large amounts of liquid can decrease her appetite.
- Your toddler should be weaned from the bottle by 14 months of age.

Tips for Getting a Toddler to Eat New and Healthy Foods

- Offer a variety of food each day.
- Serve small portions of new or disliked foods with something that he generally likes.
- Keep serving the new or disliked food. It may take several times before he tries it.
- Be a good role model by eating the healthy food yourself.



Tips for Making Mealtimes Successful & Fun

- Eat meals and snacks as a family at the table.
- Turn off the "screens." Your family will get more benefit from the time together if they are not distracted by the TV, computer or text messages.
- Offer everyone in the family the same food. Beware of short order cooking.
- Serve three meals a day at set times with planned snacks between meals.
- Offer a meal or snack every two to three hours.
- For safety's sake, always watch your toddler while they are eating to check for choking.

These Actions can Lead to Unhealthy Children and Unhappy Mealtimes

- Using food as a reward, bribe, or punishment
- Making your toddler clean their plate
- Making special foods when your toddler refuses to eat what is being served

Food Groups & Portion Sizes

Portion sizes may vary with tummy size! Your toddler may eat more or less, but this is how much you can serve to start with:

Whole Grains (2 oz per day)

- 1/2 slice whole grain bread = 1/2 oz
- 1/4 cup oatmeal, whole grain pasta, or brown rice = 1/2 oz

Vegetables (at least 1 cup per day)

- 1/4 cup raw or cooked vegetables = 1/4 cup
- 1/2 cup leafy greens = 1/4 cup

Fruits (1 cup per day)

- 1/4 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit with no added sugars = 1/4 cup

Protein (1 - 1 1/2 servings per day)

- 1 oz meat, poultry, or fish is about the size of a standard ice cube = 1/3 serving
- 1/4 cup cooked beans = 1/2 serving
- 1 egg = 1 serving

Milk (2 servings per day)

- 1/2 cup milk = 1/2 serving
- 3/4 cup yogurt = 1 serving
- 1 slice cheese = 1 serving

Healthy Fats

- From whole foods such as seafood, avocados, olives and olive oils, nuts, seeds, dairy, meat, poultry, and eggs

Foods To Limit

(choose more nutritious foods than these)

- Cookies
- Candy
- Cake
- Soda
- Fruit/Sports Drinks
- Fruit Juice
- Fried Foods
- Processed Foods

Caution! These foods might cause choking:

- Hotdogs
- Nuts and Seeds
- Whole Grapes
- Cherries
- Hard Candies
- Marshmallows
- Popcorn
- Raw Carrots
- Apples
- Sausages or Meat Sticks
- Chunks of Peanut Butter
- Chewing Gum



Information adapted from Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, LCSW, BCD, author of *Child of Mine*.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children who drink less than one liter per day of vitamin D-fortified milk should receive a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU/day. Since one liter of milk is more than the recommended two cups of milk per day for preschool children, most children will require a vitamin D supplement.

Alcohol, tobacco, and drug exposure are hazardous to a toddler. Eliminate substance use and give your child a healthy start. For more information, including referrals, ask your WIC counselor.

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider.

This publication was issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), an equal opportunity employer and provider. A digital file has been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries in compliance with section 3-114 of Title 65 of the Oklahoma Statutes and is available for download at documents.ok.gov. | Issued February 2026