

Start them right...

A Parents' Guide to
Healthy Eating for Under Fives



Introduction

One of the best ways to give children a healthy start in life is to ensure that they are eating well. Food habits and attitudes towards eating developed in early childhood can affect children's health and wellbeing both when young and later as adults. **What** children eat is important for healthy growth and development and **how** they eat is important for setting up healthy attitudes towards eating and helping to prevent behavioural problems and possible overeating.

This booklet gives practical information for parents of young children and deals with common food and nutrition issues. This is a guide only and if parents are concerned about their child's eating behaviour or health, or for specialised dietary advice, they should contact a General Practitioner, Child Health Nurse or Accredited Practising Dietitian (refer to page 27 for more information).

Acknowledgements

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Starting Right

Children need healthy food

- To get all the nutrients they need for good health and vitality.
- For optimal growth and development.
- To improve concentration and behaviour.
- To prevent a number of immediate health problems such as iron deficiency anaemia, poor weight gain, constipation and tooth decay.
- To help fight illnesses such as colds and improve wound healing.
- To help prevent lifestyle diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and osteoporosis.



- Involve your children in activities such as cooking, shopping, gardening and reading stories about food, especially new foods you'd like them to try.

Getting it right from the start

- Offer children a variety of healthy foods each day.
- Parents are responsible for the type of food offered and when it is offered.
- It is up to the child to decide how much to eat.
- It is normal for a child's appetite to vary from meal to meal and day to day.

Here are some suggestions for parents

Make food and eating an enjoyable social experience

- Eat together as a family.
- Plan ahead so meal times are relaxed.
- Discuss the flavour and taste of food with your child.
- Set up some family food rituals, e.g. pancakes for Sunday breakfast.

Offer new foods often

Young children are naturally wary of trying new foods and may need to taste a food up to 10 times before they will accept it. Give small amounts to try at first and don't pressure your child. Keep offering them at later opportunities, even if they are rejected. This will help them learn to like it. Be persistent but not pushy.

Provide meals and snacks at regular times

Three meals and 2–3 nutritious snacks a day is adequate for most children. Snacks should be thought of as “mini-meals” and need to include foods from all 5 food groups (breads and cereals, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, meat and meat alternatives). Provide small serves and offer more if requested. If children are not hungry at this time, don't worry because the next meal or snack time is just around the corner.

Let your child eat to appetite at meal and snack times

A child's appetite can vary during the day and from day to day and between children, even siblings. Children are born knowing how much they need to eat as well as knowing when they feel full and satisfied; be guided by your child's hunger.

If parents try to control how much the child eats, it is more likely that children will lose touch with their natural appetites. Encourage children to eat slowly and taste their food. Quiet activity before meals may help children to tune into their appetite.

Allow children to serve themselves when old enough.

Set a good example

Eat and enjoy a wide variety of healthy foods yourself. Try new foods and recipes often.

Set meal time rules

These may include all the family sitting together (whether or not they are eating), no negative comments about food; no distraction such as TV whilst eating.

Create a pleasant meal time environment; set the table and encourage your child to help.

Do not force or bribe a child to eat

Bribing encourages a child to reject certain foods and pressures parents into giving them what they want. Forcing or bribing a child to eat, e.g. you



can't have dessert unless you've eaten your dinner, can affect the child's ability to respond to fullness or hunger. In turn this can cause them to refuse to eat, under eat or to overeat.

If food is refused, keep calm and remove it.

Avoid negative food messages

Don't talk about foods as being "good" or "bad", as there is a place for all foods in a healthy diet. Eating **everyday foods**, foods from all 5 food groups (breads and cereals, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, meat and meat alternatives) each day and eating **sometimes foods** (biscuits, cordial, soft drinks etc.) less often is part of a healthy diet.



Children's Nutritional Needs

The best start in life for your baby is to feed them breast milk, but by about 6 months it's time to start solids.



Starting solid foods

At first – About 6 months of age

A baby is ready for solid food when they begin to control their tongue, start to sit

upright when supported, show an interest in food and have an increased appetite. **Generally this happens at about 6 months of age.**

Starting solids too early can be harmful as the baby's digestive system is not mature. It can also increase the risk of food allergies and choking.

From 6 months, the baby will start to need more than just breast milk or formula as they require extra iron, zinc and protein. If you are unsure about introducing solids, contact your Child Health Nurse.

How to introduce solids

- For the first few months offer solid foods after a milk feed as milk (breast milk or formula) is the main source of nutrition. Solid foods are given to teach the baby about eating and to begin to provide extra iron, zinc, protein and vitamins.
- To start, offer 1–2 teaspoons of one new food at a time. A new food can be added every few days.
- Try each new food separately in the morning in case the baby reacts to it. Reactions can be: watery poos, vomiting, rashes, swelling or wheezing. Reactions are uncommon but may occur with nuts, sesame seeds, egg, dairy, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. If a reaction occurs, or if you are worried because you have a strong family history of allergy, see your General Practitioner, Child Health Nurse or an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

- Increase gradually to 1–2 tablespoons of solids, 2–3 times per day.
- Do not add any solids to the baby's bottle. The baby needs to learn how to chew and swallow.
- Babies will let you know when they have had enough by refusing the food, or turning away.
- Start with bland, easily mashed or pureed foods. Your baby does not need pureed food for very long. This stage only lasts a few weeks or less. Some foods such as potato, pumpkin, banana and avocados don't even need to be pureed as they mash up easily.

Foods to introduce first

Baby cereals – e.g. make iron fortified baby rice cereal into a smooth paste with breast milk, formula or cooled, boiled water.

Mashed/Pureed Vegetables – e.g. potato, pumpkin, carrots. Progress to stronger flavoured vegetables such as cauliflower and broccoli.

Mashed/Pureed Fruit – e.g. well mashed banana, stewed apple or pear; well mashed rockmelon, watermelon (no pips). Introduce fruit after vegetables so that your baby doesn't get used to sweet foods.

Do not add sugar, salt, butter or margarine to your baby's food. They don't need it.

Freeze extras in small amounts in ice cube trays.

What's next? About 6–9 months

- Most babies can manage soft lumps soon after starting solids. Once baby can sit alone and make chewing movements, they can be encouraged to bite and chew, even if they don't have teeth.

- Encourage your baby to try mashed, minced or grated foods.
- Offer pieces of food to hold and chew to encourage self feeding (around 8 months), e.g. ripe banana, soft pear, pieces of well cooked carrot strips, rusks etc.
- Start to encourage drinking from a lidded cup at about 7 months (use cooled boiled water, expressed breast milk or formula).
- By about 8 months your baby might be having 3 meals a day and breast milk or formula feeds in between (about 5–6 milk feeds a day).

Always supervise a child while they are eating.



GRADUALLY OFFER SMALL AMOUNTS OF

Meat/chicken – tender, well cooked meat from stews and casseroles, well cooked lean mince.

Fish – without bones or batter.

Baked beans, split peas, lentils – well cooked and mashed.

Rice, pasta – cooked.

Baby cereals – rice cereal, mixed baby cereal, baby muesli – with added iron.

Egg – start with small amounts of hard boiled egg yolk. If tolerated, introduce a whole egg in different ways such as scrambled.

Dairy – yoghurt, cheese, milk, puddings or calcium fortified soy alternatives.

Note – delay the introduction of eggs, fish and dairy until 24 months of age for children with a family history (immediate family) of atopic disease (eczema, asthma, allergies).

Moving on – Over 9 months

Offer family foods that are mashed or chopped into bite size pieces. Encourage snacks between meals. Your baby will now need about 3–4 milk feeds (breast milk or formula) per day, generally after food.

After 12 months, children should be drinking from cups not bottles, and can have full cream cows milk as a main drink.

Babies are eager to feed themselves. Encourage their efforts. This is a messy, but important step.

IMPORTANT

Avoid hard foods that can increase the risk of choking e.g. hard biscuits, raw apple, carrots, celery (grate or cook until soft), sausage or frankfurt skins, whole peas, corn, beans, grapes (squash or split them or peel off the skin), popcorn, nuts (these are suitable as smooth nut spreads), hard lollies, corn chips, small bones or gristle.

Children's Nutritional Needs

Fluids for your child

Fluid for babies

Breast milk or formula continues to be a babies' major food source and drink for the first 12 months.

In hot weather, offer more frequent feeds to breast-fed babies and cooled boiled water between feeds to formula fed babies.

What about cows milk for under 12 months?

Cows milk is **not recommended before 12 months** of age as it doesn't have enough iron and vitamins for growth and development. It can strain the gut and may increase the risk of an allergic reaction. Once dairy foods are introduced, small amounts of cows milk can be added to foods such as cereals, desserts and in cooking.

Infants and children – How much fluid do they need?

Children 1–3 years of age –

- 1 litre per day (plain water, milk and other drinks).
- This equals about 4 cups per day.

Children 4–8 years of age –

- 1.2 litres per day (plain water, milk and other drinks).
- This equals about 5 cups per day.

Best drinks for toddlers

Water...

- It's cheap, freely available and has no sugar, artificial colourings or flavourings.
- Helps protect against tooth decay.
- Most children enjoy water if they get into the habit of drinking it at an early age.



- Have a jug of water in the fridge and place it on the table at mealtimes. Add lemon or orange slices for interest.

Milk...

- Include milk at snack times.
- It's best to give milk by cup not bottle.
- For children aged 1–2 years choose full fat cows milk. Children over 2 years of age can have reduced-fat dairy products (including milk).
- Don't let your child fill up just with milk, as it may lead to a poor appetite for other nutritious foods.



Non-dairy drinks e.g. soy drinks –

Check these have at least 100 mg calcium per 100 ml.

Other alternatives –

- Rice milk or oat milk are not suitable due to the lack of protein.

About fruit juice –

Large quantities of juice can cause tooth decay, reduce appetite and lead to diarrhoea due to its high concentration of natural sugars. Children don't need any juice (just offer water). If you offer juice use 100% juice varieties and give no more than ½ cup per day. Dilute it to 50:50 with water and serve it in a cup not a bottle.

Other sweet drinks such as cordial, soft drink, sports drinks and flavoured milks are high in sugar and contain little other nutritional value. They are not needed as part of a healthy diet.

Remember

Avoid putting your child to bed with a bottle of juice or milk – as this increases the risk of tooth decay.

Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia

The nutritional needs of children and adolescents are different from those of adults because children are growing and developing. The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents were developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in 1995 and were reviewed in 2003. These guidelines aim to promote healthy eating and physical activity from birth to 18 years.

Encourage and support breastfeeding

Children and adolescents need sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally

- Growth should be checked regularly for young children
- Physical activity is important for all children and adolescents

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods

Children and adolescents should be encouraged to:

- Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
- Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- Include milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives

Reduced-fat milks are not suitable for young children under 2 years, because of their high-energy needs, but reduced-fat varieties should be encouraged for older children and adolescents.

- Choose water as a drink

and care should be taken to:

- Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake. Low fat diets are not suitable for infants
- Choose foods low in salt
- Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing sugars

Care for your child's food: prepare and store it safely

Children's Nutritional Needs

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

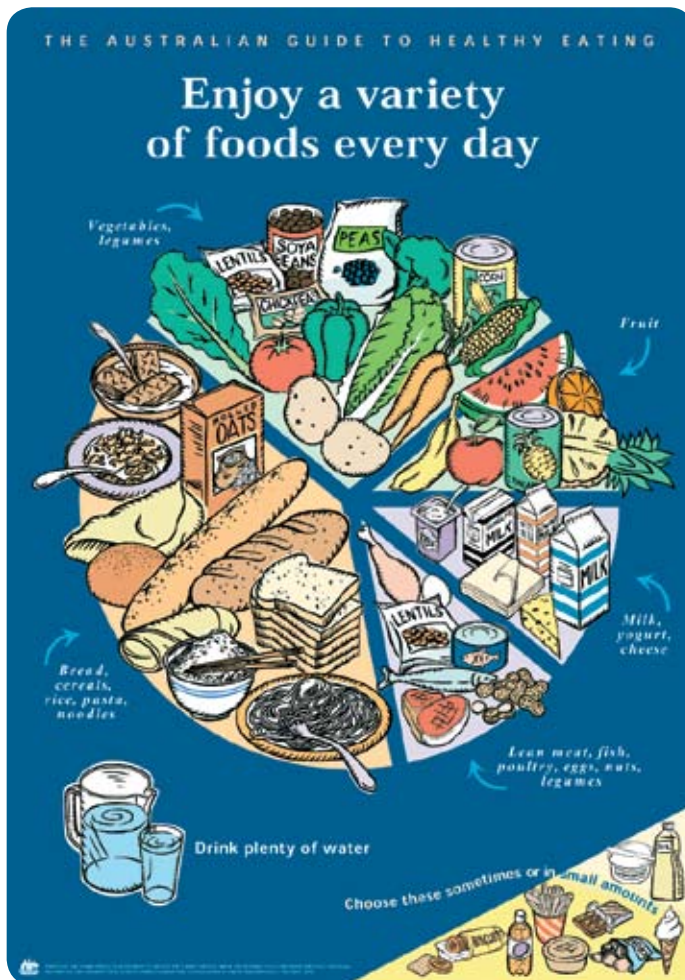
Following the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating will ensure all family members get enough of the nutrients they need for good health.

The 5 food groups are:

- Breads and cereals
- Vegetables, legumes
- Fruit
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese or calcium fortified alternatives

- Meat, fish, poultry, nuts, legumes (e.g. baked beans, chickpeas, kidney beans), eggs and tofu.

It is important to offer a variety of foods from each of the food groups. Healthy eating for children is about exposure to and enjoyment of a wide variety of foods rather than measuring how much a child eats from each food group. Think about what your child eats across a week rather than each individual day and remember this is a guide only as appetites vary from child to child and from day to day.



A guide to what and how much to offer

The serve sizes provided are the same as for adults. However as children have small stomachs, offering smaller serves but more often may be more successful.

Please note –

- Number of serves for 1–3 year olds: these are **suggestions** only as there are no Australian recommendations for the number of serves for 1–3 year olds.
- The **recommended** number of serves for 4–7 year olds has been taken from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, background information for consumers using option B (page 20).



Breads and Cereals

1–3 years of age: at least 2 serves per day

4–7 years of age: at least 3–4 serves per day

One serve =

- 2 slices of bread or a medium bread roll
- 4 large plain cracker biscuits
- 2 Weetbix™ or Vitabrits™
- 1 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles
- 1 cup porridge, 1 ½ cup breakfast flakes or ½ cup muesli
- 2 small pancakes

Tip

Choose wholemeal/multigrain products where possible.



Provide carbohydrates, protein, fibre, folate, B vitamins and iron.

Children's Nutritional Needs

Vegetables

1–3 years of age: at least 1 serve per day

4–7 years of age: at least 4 serves per day

One serve =

- 1 cup salad vegetables
- 1 cooked potato or ½ cup mashed potato
- ½ cup cooked mixed vegetables
- ½ cup cooked dried (or canned) beans, peas or lentils



Tip

Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables of different colours each day. They contain different minerals and vitamins and protective factors for good health, growth and development.

Provide vitamins, minerals, fibre and carbohydrates.

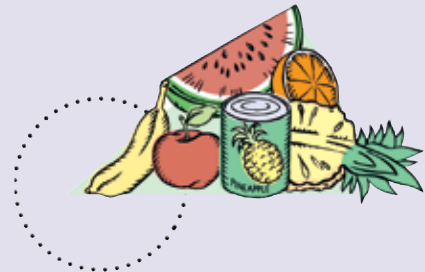
Fruit

1–3 years of age: at least 1 serve per day

4–7 years of age: at least 2 serves per day

One serve =

- 1 medium piece of fruit e.g. banana, apple or orange
- 1 slice of melon or 2 small fruits e.g. apricots, plums
- 1 cup canned/stewed fruit
- 1½ tablespoons dried fruit (limit to 1 serve a day)
- ½ cup fruit juice (dilute to 50:50 with water and limit to 1 serve a day).



Tip

Children should be encouraged to eat whole fruits rather than fruit juice or dried fruit to meet their daily fruit intake. Whole fruits contain more fibre than fruit juice and less concentrated sugar than dried fruits.

Provide vitamins, carbohydrates and fibre.

Milk and Dairy Products

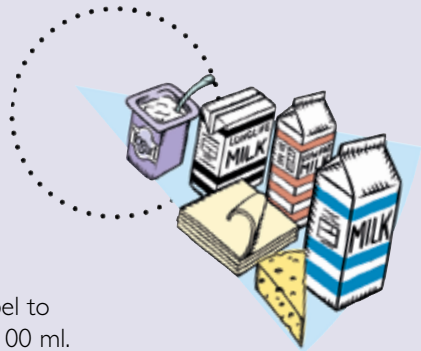
1–3 years of age: at least 1 ½ serves per day

4–7 years of age: at least 2–2 ½ serves per day

Choose full cream dairy products for children under 2 years of age as full cream dairy contains fat, fat soluble vitamins and energy that young children need. After the age of 2 reduced-fat dairy can be used but this does not include skim or no fat dairy products.

One serve =

- 250 ml (1 cup) fresh, long life or reconstituted powdered milk
- 250 ml (1 cup) calcium fortified soy milk
- 40 gm (2 slices) cheese
- 200 gm (1 small carton) yoghurt



Tip

If using a dairy milk substitute (e.g. soy milk) read the label to make sure there is at least 100 mg of calcium (Ca) per 100 ml.

Provide calcium, protein, riboflavin and vitamin B₁₂

Meat and Meat Alternatives

1–3 years of age: ½ serve per day

4–7 years of age: ½–1 serve per day

One serve =

- 65–100 gm cooked meat, chicken e.g. ½ cup lean mince, 2 small chops or 2 slices roast meat
- ½ cup cooked (dried) beans, lentils, chick peas, split peas or canned beans
- 80–120 gm cooked fish fillet
- 2 small eggs
- ½ cup peanuts or almonds (for children over the age of 5)
- ¼ cup sunflower seeds or sesame seeds



Tip

Choose lean meats, trim excess fat, remove skin from chicken and cook in minimal amounts of fat, e.g. oil, margarine, butter. Remove fish bones. Whole nuts are not suitable for children under the age of 5 as they are a choking risk.

Provide protein, iron, zinc, niacin and vitamin B₁₂

Children's Nutritional Needs

Example menu for a 1 year old

This is an example only and the amount of food eaten will vary according to your child's appetite.

Offer plenty of water during the day

Breakfast

Cereal and milk
Fruit – mixed into cereal or on its own
Breast milk or formula



Morning tea

Fingers/wedges of fruit
Small tub of yoghurt



Lunch

Pasta with mince and vegetable sauce
Piece of fruit
Breast milk or formula



Afternoon tea

Crumpet topped with cheese



Evening meal

Baked beans
Slice of wholemeal/multigrain bread
Custard and fruit



Before bed

Breast milk or formula



Example menu for a 3 year old

This is an example only and the amount of food eaten will vary according to your child's appetite.

Offer plenty of water during the day

Breakfast

Porridge with reduced-fat milk,
topped with sultanas



Morning tea

Crumpet with banana and reduced-fat
yoghurt topping

Glass of reduced-fat milk



Lunch

Sandwich – wholemeal/multigrain bread with
smooth peanut butter and grated carrot filling
2 small nectarines



Afternoon tea

Banana and strawberry smoothie (made with
real fruit, reduced-fat milk and yoghurt)

Pikelet



Evening meal

Tuna casserole with rice

Tomato wedges and cucumber slices



Before bed

Glass of reduced-fat milk or a tub of yoghurt
or a piece of cheese



Children's Nutritional Needs

Example menu for a 5 year old

This is an example only and the amount of food eaten will vary according to your child's appetite.

Offer plenty of water during the day

Breakfast

Boiled egg
English muffin and reduced-fat cheese
Banana
Glass of reduced-fat milk



Morning tea

Small tub of reduced-fat yoghurt
Raisin bread with/without ricotta spread



Lunch

Vegetable and noodle soup
Small bread roll
Piece of fruit



Afternoon tea

Flat bread with hommus, lettuce and tomato



Evening meal

1-2 slices of roast beef
Baked potato, steamed broccoli, carrot and corn
Berries and ice cream



Before bed

Glass of reduced-fat milk or a tub of yoghurt or a piece of cheese



Food Ideas

What's for breakfast?

Breakfast refuels the body ready for the day's activities. It gives children the nutrients and energy to get them through the day and for their growth and development. Children who eat breakfast also tend to be more alert and eager to learn compared to children who skip breakfast.

Breakfast in a bowl

- Breakfast cereal, chopped fruit and milk in a bowl.
- Yoghurt with chopped or stewed fruit.
- Porridge with milk and dried or fresh fruit.
- Rice porridge with meat or chicken and vegetables.
- Bircher muesli: moisten muesli with milk or juice, leave in fridge overnight and top with yoghurt and fruit before serving.

Breakfast in a flash

- Tub of yoghurt and a piece of fruit.
- Toasted fruit bread or fruit muffin.
- Rice cakes with smooth peanut butter and banana.
- Wheatflake breakfast biscuits e.g. Weetbix™, Vitabrits™ with sliced banana.
- Smooth peanut butter on wholemeal/multigrain bread.



Breakfast in a glass

- Fruit smoothies: blend milk with fresh or tinned fruit and yoghurt. Try bananas or strawberries.
- Yoghurt drinks.
- Fruit lassies: blend yoghurt and fresh fruit or fruit juice such as mango, rockmelon, berries, banana, apricot.

Hot breakfast

- Baked beans on wholemeal/multigrain toast.
- Scrambled eggs on toast or crumpet.
- Boiled or poached eggs and cooked tomatoes on wholemeal/multigrain toast.
- Pizza muffin: top muffins with tomato paste, tomato slices, capsicum strips, mushrooms, pineapple and cheese. Grill or bake.
- Toasted sandwiches/jaffles made with ham, pineapple and tomato, baked beans or tinned spaghetti or fruit bread with ricotta, apple and sultanas (check temperature of fillings before serving).
- Vegetable pikelets or fruit or vegetable muffins.
- Pancakes with fruit and yoghurt or vegetables and cheese.

Food Ideas

What's for lunch?

Add fruit and a drink (preferably water or milk).

Lunch at home

- Vegetable and bean soup with a bread roll.
- Toasted sandwich or jaffle with:
 - mild mexican chilli beans, cheese and creamed corn
 - tuna and asparagus
 - ham and cheese
 - creamed corn, pineapple and cheese
- Low-fat 2 minute noodles (omit the flavour sachet) cooked with a variety of vegetables and an egg or leftover meat or chicken.
- Pasta with tomato and beef sauce and grated cheese.
- Home-made burger with a lean meat pattie and salad.

Lunch in a box

- Tiger sandwiches – layers of different coloured bread with different fillings e.g. cream cheese and grated carrot.
- Chicken and chopped vegetables in pita bread.
- Smooth peanut butter and banana on raisin bread.
- Lean roast beef, seeded mustard and lettuce on rye bread.
- Vegemite™, cheese and chopped celery on a bagel.
- Fill lunch box with cherry tomatoes, lettuce, cucumber, green beans, egg, cheese cubes and a small bread roll.
- Leftover home-made pizza.
- Pasta salad with chicken, 3 bean mix and mixed vegetables.

Lunch in a flash

- Tin of salt-reduced soup or home-made soup with a roll.



- Savoury muffin and yoghurt.
- Plain or flavoured tin of fish (preferably in spring water) with a bread roll, tomato and grated carrot.
- Cheese slices or sticks, baby carrots, crackers and a small tub of hommus.
- Boiled egg and a bread roll, cucumber and snow peas.
- Slices of cold meat such as lean ham or turkey with salad and crackers.

Note – Some of these ideas may contain choking hazards for younger children.

Remember

Keep lunches safe

Use a frozen ice brick or drink, insulated lunch box or freeze sandwiches the night before.

Super snack ideas

Children have small stomachs and need snacks between meals to help meet their growth and energy needs. Snacks should be thought of as “mini-meals”, an important part of the day’s food and not just something extra or a “treat”. Home-made snacks are often cheaper and healthier than pre-packaged snacks. Have your child help you make them.

Snacks containing foods from the 5 food groups (breads and cereals, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, meat and meat alternatives) should be offered every day.

Breads and cereals

- Toasted english muffins, crumpets, fruit bread or toast.
- Grilled bread fingers with ham, cheese and pineapple.
- Pita chips – cut pita bread into triangles, sprinkle with grated cheese and bake in moderate oven until crispy (store in airtight container).
- Pikelets or scones with toppings.
- Sandwiches or rolls.
- Savoury muffins.
- Fruit muffins or fruit buns.
- Home-made fruit cake.
- Rice cakes with smooth peanut butter, honey or Vegemite™.
- Wholemeal/multigrain crispbread with cheese and Vegemite™.
- Leftover homemade pizza.
- Plain popcorn (for older children).
- Plain bread roll.
- A small tin of spaghetti.

Vegetables

- Raw or lightly steamed vegetables e.g. cauliflower, celery, carrot, capsicum, snow peas, broccoli, cucumber with dip.

- Steamed corn on the cob.
- Celery sticks filled with smooth peanut butter or cottage cheese.
- Dips served with vegetable sticks e.g. hommus.
- Vegetable soup.



Fruit

- Fresh fruit, fruit salad or dried fruit.
- Frozen fruit e.g. orange segments, sliced banana, watermelon or grapes.
- Nibble pack with dried fruit, cherry tomatoes and cheese slices.
- Dips served with fruit e.g. yoghurt.
- Tinned or stewed fruit, including fruit cups and packs. Choose those with no added sugar.

Dairy products

- Milk drinks – plain milk, smoothies (made with real fruit, milk and yoghurt) and milkshakes.
- Yoghurt – fruit, frozen or plain.
- Fruche®, creamed rice or custard.

Meat and meat alternatives

- A boiled egg.
- A small tin of baked beans.
- 1 or 2 mini quiches.
- Celery sticks filled with smooth peanut butter.
- Mini meatballs.
- Hommus with crackers or vegetable sticks for dipping.
- Slices of cold meat e.g. lean ham, roast chicken, turkey or beef.

Other ideas

- Savoury toast.

Quick, easy meals and takeaways

Quick and easy meal ideas

- Add frozen diced vegetables to low fat 2 minute noodles (omit the flavour sachet), cook and top with cheese.
- Serve takeaway BBQ chicken (with skin removed) or pizza with salad or vegetables.
- Combine a tin or packet of soup with pasta, leftover meat or chicken and mixed vegetables and serve with a bread roll, pita bread or bagel.
- Stir tinned fish (salmon, tuna or sardines) through some cooked pasta or rice and add vegetables such as corn, diced carrot, diced zucchini and peas.
- Make an omelette or scrambled eggs with grated or diced vegetables such as carrot, zucchini, tomato, corn or mushrooms.
- Oven bake fish (in foil) and serve with oven baked potato or sweet potato wedges and salad.
- Microwave a jacket potato, top with baked beans and serve with salad.
- Use leftover chicken to make a chicken burger with a wholemeal/multigrain bread roll and salad.
- Make a snack platter with cut up fruit and vegetables, dips, toast fingers, diced cheese and leftover or sliced lean meats.

Takeaways

Takeaways can cost a lot, are often high in fat and salt and low in fibre and vitamins. Having takeaway



food occasionally is OK, but if you are having takeaway more than once or twice a week, try to buy healthier choices.

Tip

Combine takeaway foods with healthy foods such as:

- Salads.
- Plain milk (as a drink).
- Fruit.
- Bread.

For example:

Burgers Have burgers that include salad.

Pizza Have more vegetable toppings e.g. pineapple, capsicum, mushroom and tomato.

Sandwiches Choose salad sandwiches and rolls with ham, roast beef, chicken, egg or cheese. Try different types and shapes of breads e.g. wholemeal, grain bread, rolled up mountain bread, bagels etc. and different types of salad fillings.

Chicken Choose BBQ chicken and remove the skin. Have with bread and salad instead of chips.

Fish Have grilled fish with rice or bread and salad rather than chips. Try different types of seafood.

Asian Try different dishes especially ones with new foods. Choose stir-fries, steamed or BBQ dishes or dishes with lots of vegetables and have with steamed rice or noodles. Avoid deep-fried or battered dishes.

Italian Choose tomato-based dishes. Try ones with different ingredients and a variety of vegetables.

Lebanese Try souvlaki/kebabs with plenty of salad or pita bread with tabouleh.

Hot potatoes Try vegetable toppings such as beans or salads. Limit excess sour cream, cheese, butter and bacon.

Children and Eating Behaviour

Fussy eating

Fussy eating and food fads are common among young children. They are easily distracted and use food as a way of showing their independence. No single food is essential to a child's diet (except breast milk or formula for infants). If your child is growing well, full of energy and happy then you have no need to worry about them not getting enough to eat. Don't worry if food intake varies from one day to the next, it usually evens out over the week. If you are worried about the diet or health of your child contact your General Practitioner, Child Health Nurse or an Accredited Practising Dietitian.



Below are some common behaviours and ideas to try.

Common behaviour	Possible causes	Suggestions to try
Child won't eat food served.	<p>Child may not be hungry. A child's appetite can vary from day to day with their changing activity and growth.</p> <p>Child may be testing you. This is often a sign of growing independence.</p> <p>Child may be tired. Children do not eat well when they are tired.</p> <p>A parent may be expecting their child to eat more food than they need. Remember that toddlers grow slower than babies. Children are the only ones who know how much they need to eat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calmly remove uneaten food and don't make a fuss.• Check how much juice, milk and snack foods have been eaten over the day. Your child may have filled up on these.• Expect your child to stay at the table even if they don't eat.• If your child decides they are hungry between meals or snacks, offer the food they passed up on or ask them to wait until the next meal or snack.• Have regular meals and snacks and avoid delays to meals.• Serve small amounts.• Let your child decide how much they will eat.• Do not bribe or force your child to eat.

Common behaviour	Possible causes	Suggestions to try
Child demanding one of their favourite foods and refusing food served.	If a parent always serves favourite foods, the child will not learn to try new foods and will always demand their favourite food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can choose to eat or not but don't replace it with the favourite food. • Offer a choice of 2 healthy foods e.g. cereal or fruit. • When offering new foods serve with a familiar food. • Involve them in the menu planning at an early age.
Child will not try new foods.	Some children are anxious about new foods and need to be served it many times before trying it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember learning to like new foods takes time. See small successes as progress e.g. picking up or tasting the food. • Put a small serve on their plate whenever you have it. • Mix it in with other food. • Let them see you eat it. • Involve them with growing, cooking or making the food.
Child is misbehaving at the table.	<p>Child may be trying to get attention.</p> <p>Child may be tired.</p> <p>Child may be distracted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child is playing with food, e.g. spitting, throwing or dropping food onto the floor; calmly remove the food. • Try to have meals and snacks at regular times. • Serve main meal at lunchtime. • Have a quiet time before meals. • Switch off the TV. • Don't allow toys at the table.
Child has a fad on certain foods.	Most children go through food fads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These often change. Try to ignore food fads, be patient and keep offering a range of foods.
Child insists on feeding themselves.	This is a sign of growing independence. Children learn about food by touching and smelling. It is important to allow some mess and time for meals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to feed his or herself by giving finger food. • Prepare for the mess; put a plastic sheet or some newspaper under the child's chair. • Keep a sense of humour and have a camera handy!
Child refuses to eat vegetables/meat/milk/water.	Children often refuse foods. If they are not eating any foods from the one food group, you will need to find some replacements for those foods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the section on 'Help My Child Won't Eat...' for ideas. • Keep offering new foods and give them in different ways.

Children and Eating Behaviour



Help, my child won't eat...

No single food is essential to a child's diet (except breast milk or formula for infants). Here are some ideas for alternatives if foods are refused.

Help, my child won't eat vegetables

- Offer them lots of salad, vegetables and fruit during the day.
- Mash, grate or puree vegetables into mince dishes, pancakes, soups, pizza and dips.
- Offer vegetable or lentil purees as a dip with wholemeal/multigrain crackers or bread e.g. hommus.
- If they like mashed potato, mash in sweet potato, pumpkin, carrot or peas to make different colours.
- Have vegetables as finger food e.g. wedges with a dipping sauce or smooth peanut butter as a snack.
- Keep offering small serves of a variety of different fruits and vegetables. Be patient. Children learn to like foods they are familiar with.
- Get your child to help prepare vegetables or even grow them.
- Don't bribe them to eat their vegetables.
- Let them see you enjoy your vegetables!

Help, my child won't eat meat

Many children refuse to eat red meat and chicken because they can't chew it properly. If so, serve it soft or minced. Meat is important because it provides protein, iron and zinc. Here are some alternatives.

- Eggs, smooth peanut butter; baked beans, tofu, fish, pâté and dairy foods are good protein foods.
- Chicken, fish, legumes, (e.g. baked beans, lentils), spinach, silverbeet, smooth peanut butter; iron-fortified breakfast cereals (check label), wholemeal bread and dried fruits contain small amounts of iron.
- Try meat and chicken in finger food wedges so your child can feed themselves e.g. meat balls or patties.
- Put meat in soups and puree it together.
- Offer cold meats at lunchtimes. Often children are tired at teatime and won't chew meat.
- Have meat or baked beans in sandwiches and jaffles.
- Keep meat moist by using sauces e.g. bolognaise.



Help, my child won't drink...

Help, my child won't drink milk

Milk is an excellent source of calcium and protein for children. If your child won't drink it, try some of these ideas:

- Mash cottage cheese, ricotta cheese or milk powder into mashed potato and mashed banana.
- Grate cheese into mashed potato, on vegetables, into soups and casseroles.
- Have cheese sandwiches or grilled cheese jaffles.
- Have yoghurt by itself or add to fruit juice, soups, casseroles or with stewed fruit.
- Offer smoothies made with real fruit, yoghurt and milk or a fruit lassi.
- Have milk-based desserts such as Fruche®, custard, rice pudding and junket.
- Add milk powder to mashed vegetables, soups, jellies, stewed fruit and pancakes.
- Try soy products with added calcium (100 mg per 100 mls).
- Use cream cheese spreads on bread and dry biscuits instead of butter or margarine.

Help, my child won't drink water

Some ways in which you can encourage your child to drink water are:

- Always offer water or milk if your child asks for a drink.
- Have water on the table at each meal and ensure everyone has a glass. Set a good example yourself by drinking water.
- Only buy soft drinks, cordials and juices occasionally and don't have them in the house.
- Carry a water bottle with you when you go out anywhere.
- Limit juice to one diluted glass daily.
- Use crazy shaped ice blocks.
- Add some chopped fruit to a jug of water for some extra interest.
- Let children pour their own water from a pump pack or water cooler.
- Explain to carers and relatives that you want your child to be given only water or milk as drinks.

Nutrition Resources

Good sources of information

Books and videos

Breast, Bottle, Bowl, the Best Fed Baby Book
Hillis & Stive (Bay Books) 1993.

Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family
Ellyn Satter (Kelcy Press) 1999.

Family Food/Feud
Video and DVD Community Nutrition Unit 2006.

Child of Mine Ellyn Satter
(Bull Publishing Company) 2000.

Your Child's Weight: Helping not Harming
Ellyn Satter (Kelcy Press) 2005.

Cookbooks

FoodCents Family Cookbook
Health Department WA, 1997.

Kitchen Garden Cooking with Kids
Stephanie Alexander (Lantern Books) 2006.

Real Food for Kids
Rachael Anne Hill (Ryland Peters & Small) 2005.

The New Classic Cookbook
Heart Foundation Loukie Werle
(Park Street Press) 2007.

Some of these books and cookbooks may be available for loan through your local Child Health and Parenting Information Library, Australian Breastfeeding Association, Community Health Centre or the Community Nutrition Unit:

Ph 03 6222 7222

Fax 03 6222 7252

Email community.nutrition@dhhs.tas.gov.au

Websites

Eat Well Tasmania
www.eatwelltasmania.com.au

Go for 2 and 5
www.gofor2and5.com.au

Go For Your Life
www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au

Nutrition Australia
www.nutritionaustralia.org

Anaphylaxis Australia
www.allergy.org.au

Better Health Channel
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Kids Health Info
www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/factsheets

Australian Breastfeeding Association
www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Dietitians Association of Australia
www.daa.asn.au

Catherine Saxelby
www.foodwatch.com.au

Getting help

The following organisations, groups and departments provide a variety of written and verbal information for parents and health professionals about nutrition and children in Tasmania. For interstate contacts please refer to the service from which you obtained this booklet.

Accredited Practising Dietitians (Hospital based) North-West Regional Hospital (Burnie) 03 6430 6597 Royal Hobart Hospital 03 6222 8145 Launceston General Hospital 03 6348 7477 Devonport Community and Health Services 03 6421 7757	Accredited Practising Dietitians APD (Private) Consult the Yellow Pages
Community Nutrition Unit Community Nutrition Unit, 3/25 Argyle St, Hobart, Tasmania 7000 Ph 03 6222 7222 Fax 03 6222 7252 Email community.nutrition@dhhs.tas.gov.au	Local Community Health Centres Check under Health in the phone book
Child Health and Parenting Service South 03 6230 7899 North 03 6336 2130 Devonport 03 6421 7800 Burnie 03 6434 6451 or via the local Child Health Nurse at your local Child Health Centre or school	Parenting Centres South 03 6233 2700 North 03 6326 6188 NorthWest 03 6434 6201 Parent information (after hours) state-wide 1300 808 178
Good Beginnings Ph 02 9211 6767 Website www.goodbeginnings.net.au	Early Support for Parents 03 6223 2937
Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline South 03 6223 2609 North 03 6331 2799 North West Look under Australian Breastfeeding Association in the phone book	Dietitians Association of Australia Website www.daa.asn.au Family Food PATCH Project Ph 03 6224 9198 Email familyfoodpatch@iprimus.com.au
Nutrition Australia Website www.nutritionaustralia.org	Food Allergy Clinic Royal Hobart Hospital 03 6222 8145

