

Eating well and moving more for children aged 1-5



A guide for families

Eating well and moving more is really important for children and the whole family -

- ✓ Eating well gives children the right nutrients they need for growth
- ✓ Moving more helps their bodies develop and work at their best

This leaflet offers hints and tips to help you give your child a healthy lifestyle that the whole family can enjoy.

What is eating well?

Eating a wide variety of foods is important to make sure young children get the nutrients they need. Children under 5 years have different nutritional needs from adults and older children, so should follow different dietary advice.

To get the balance right, use the top tips and think about the **different food groups** described over the following pages.

Top Tips

- ✓ Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
- ✓ Have some bread, cereal, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods with every meal.
- ✓ Drink milk and include yoghurt and cheese too.
- ✓ Include meat, fish, eggs and beans for protein.
- ✓ Limit sugary, fatty and salty foods.
- ✓ Children aged 1 to 5 are growing very fast but only have small stomachs. This means they need frequent small meals with healthy snacks between meals to help make sure they get the nutrition they need.
- ✓ All children can be fussy eaters at times but offering small amounts of new foods will help your child start to accept and enjoy them.



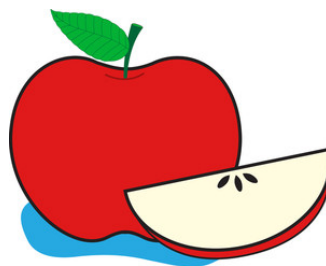
Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are really important for children – they provide vitamins, minerals and fibre needed to grow and stay healthy. Encouraging your child to eat a variety of different fruits and vegetables will help them get the variety of vitamins and minerals they need.

It's recommended that children have **at least 5 different portions of fruit and vegetables a day** – a portion is roughly what will fit into your child's hand - as your child grows, so will their portion.

5 Ways to give your child 5 a day

- ✓ Try raw vegetable sticks as a snack or side dish. Halve or quarter cherry tomatoes to avoid choking.
- ✓ Children enjoy fruit as a snack. To make them easier to eat and reduce the risk of choking: remove any stones or pips before serving, halve small fruits like cherries or grapes, cut large fruits into slices rather than chunks.
- ✓ Add different vegetables to casseroles, pasta sauces and pizza toppings. Avoid 'hiding' vegetables as children will never learn to like them if they don't know that they are there.
- ✓ For healthy puddings, make a fruit salad by mixing chopped fruit together or make a milk pudding by mashing fruit with plain yoghurt or custard.
- ✓ Frozen and canned fruit and vegetables are quick, cheap and still healthy. Choose vegetables canned with no salt, and fruit canned in fruit juice.



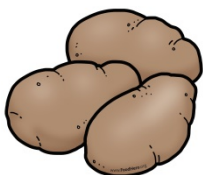
Bread, cereal, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

Starchy foods are the body's main source of energy, so aim to have them with every meal and some snacks. More examples of starchy foods are cereals, noodles, chapattis and yams.

High-fibre foods should be gradually introduced to young children's diets. For example, start with a little wholemeal bread instead of white. As your child gets older, add more brown, wholegrain and high-fibre foods. By the time your child is 5 years old, they should be eating a wide variety of healthy options.

Top Tips

- ✓ Try lots of different types of these starchy foods with your child – variety is great!
- ✓ Vary potatoes to keep them interesting – try baked, mashed or wedges. Involve your child by giving wedges as a finger food, letting them add fillings to baked potatoes, or asking them to help mash potatoes.
- ✓ Try different pasta shapes and colours, but limit tinned pasta as this can often have added salt and sugar.
- ✓ Small servings of starchy foods make great snacks. Try plain popcorn, toast, bread sticks, crumpets, oatcakes, pancakes, rice cakes and scones.



Milk and dairy foods

Milk and dairy foods contain calcium for strong bones and teeth.

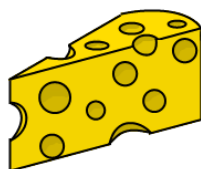
Three servings a day will give your child the calcium they need.

One serving is:

a small glass of milk (120ml),
a slice of cheese (15-20g),
or half a pot of yoghurt (60g).

Top Tips

- ✓ Use semi-skimmed milk after their second birthday. Skimmed milk can be used once they are 5 years old.
- ✓ Milk on breakfast cereal and in sauces all help to make sure your child is getting enough.
- ✓ Cheese can be given as sandwich fillers on toast or as a snack – grated cheese, cheese spreads or individual cheese portions are other options.
- ✓ Try plain yoghurt or fromage frais with fruit as a pudding or snack.
- ✓ If you use an alternative to cow's milk, make sure it is fortified with calcium and unsweetened.



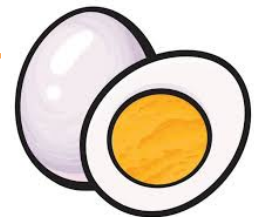
Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein foods

Protein is important for your child's growth. The best sources are meat, poultry, fish, eggs and beans and pulses.

It's recommended that children have at least 2 servings every day.

Top Tips

- ✓ Mince, chicken or other meat cooked in a sauce is easy for children to chew and swallow. Try shepherd's pie, meatballs or a slow cooked chicken casserole.
- ✓ Serve fish at least twice a week. Oily fish like tinned mackerel, sardines and pilchards good for brain development and healthy hearts. Include one serving of oily fish a week.
- ✓ Eggs are great and can be boiled, poached or scrambled and served with toast or in sandwiches.
- ✓ Adding lentils, beans and pulses to soups and sauces is a good way to add protein and other nutrients. Dhal is also good.
- ✓ Cold meat, canned tuna, pastes, hummus and peanut butter make great sandwich fillings. Read the labels of processed or canned meat, fish and beans. Choose varieties that are very low in salt.



A note about iron

Foods that contain iron are important for your child and should be offered every day. Good sources of iron include:

- ✓ red meat, pork and chicken
- ✓ oily fish such as sardines, mackerel and salmon
- ✓ beans, kidney beans, chickpeas
- ✓ fortified breakfast cereals
- ✓ eggs
- ✓ partially dried figs, apricots and dates.

Iron is better absorbed when eaten with foods containing vitamin C. Oranges, tomatoes and fruits juice are very high in vitamin C.

Allergies and intolerances

Very few children become allergic to foods or food additives. However, if you think your child is reacting to any food, go to your doctor or health visitor. Do not restrict foods unless you have been advised to by a doctor or dietitian.

Children under 5 shouldn't be given any whole nuts because of the risk of choking. Nut butters or pastes are fine. Nuts are a good source of protein **but some children can be severely allergic to peanuts.** If you have any concerns about allergy, speak to your GP or Health Visitor.

How much should my child drink?

Your child needs a drink at each meal and in-between too, so around 6-8 cups each day.

Children's drinks are around 120-150ml.



Top Tips

- ✓ Water and milk are the best drinks for children – they're safe for teeth.
- ✓ Unsweetened fruit juice can be given with meals, but is more likely to damage teeth if taken between meals. Always dilute fruit juice – use one part juice to at least one part water.
- ✓ Fizzy drinks and squash are not recommended for young children – they're bad for teeth (even sugar-free versions)
- ✓ It's best not to give children under 5 years tea or coffee.
- ✓ By the age of one year it's best that children are drinking from a cup or beaker (using bottles can damage teeth and slow speech development).
- ✓ Drinking more can help deal with common problems such as constipation, poor concentration and alertness.



Food high in fat, sugar or salt

Foods such as cakes, pastries, biscuits, chocolate, crisps, sweets and fried foods contain very few nutrients. They are high in sugar, fat and often salt. Eating too many of these foods can lead to bad habits, health problems and damage your child's teeth (sugar) and kidneys (salt). It is best to limit these foods and only have them occasionally.

Snack ideas

Try to include some fruit or vegetable as part of any snack:

- ✓ apple slices
- ✓ puffed wheat and banana slices
- ✓ satsuma segments
- ✓ oatcake, cream cheese and cucumber slice
- ✓ halved cherry tomatoes
- ✓ scotch pancake slices and pear slices
- ✓ radish slices
- ✓ bread stick, hummus and carrot sticks
- ✓ tinned pineapple chunks in juice
- ✓ boiled egg slices and red pepper slices
- ✓ pitta slices, nut butter and cucumber



Moving more

Physical activity for early years (birth – 5 years)

Active children are healthy, happy,
 school ready and sleep better

 BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL SKILLS	 MAINTAINS HEALTH & WEIGHT	 CONTRIBUTES TO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING
 IMPROVES SLEEP	 DEVELOPS MUSCLES & BONES	 ENCOURAGES MOVEMENT & CO-ORDINATION

Every movement counts

Aim for at least



3 Hours

across everyday

				
PLAYGROUND	JUMP	CLIMB		
				
MESSY PLAY	THROW/CATCH	SKIP		
				
OBJECT PLAY	DANCE	GAMES	PLAY	
				
TUMMY TIME	SWIM	WALK	SCOOT	BIKE

Move more. Sit less. Play together

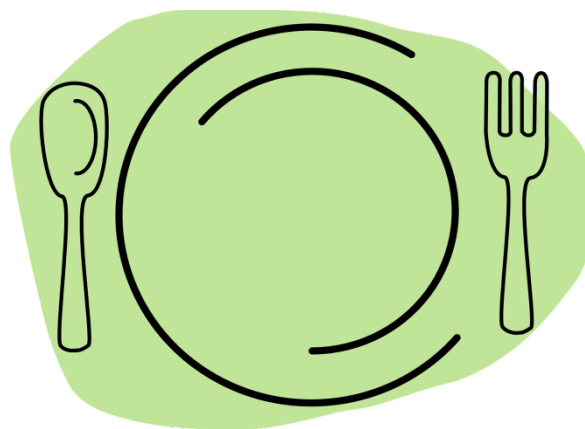
UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines 2011 **Start Active, Stay Active:** www.bit.ly/startactive

If you're worried your child is putting on too much weight

- ✓ Think about ways you could try to limit the amount of fatty and sugary foods the family has.
- ✓ If your child has sugary drinks it's best to cut these out.
- ✓ For children over the age of 2, changing from whole milk to semi-skimmed milk (green top) will help reduce their fat intake.
- ✓ Think about ways your child could do more activity including fun things you can do together, for example, active play, walking to nursery or dancing
- ✓ It might also be worth gradually reducing your child's portion sizes of meals and snacks.

Portion sizes

- ✓ Young children have small tummies so they will need less food. It seems obvious but a 5 year old will need less than a 10 year old who will need less than an adult.
- ✓ Have some child sized plates and bowls. Plates around 20cm across and bowls 12cm across are about right.
- ✓ Clearing plates is not compulsory, young appetites can vary day to day.
- ✓ It's better to serve a smaller portion to start with, and let them ask for more if they're still hungry.
- ✓ Portions of fruit and vegetables are roughly what will fit into your child's hand, as they grow so will the portion size.



Mealtime tips

- Regular mealtimes help to make sure children don't become too hungry or too tired to eat well.
- Children learn from others and copy the behaviour they see. Eating together with your child helps them enjoy mealtimes, copy healthy behaviours and encourages them to try new foods.
- Remember to limit salt and sugar in cooking – the whole family will benefit from having less.
- Children respond really well to praise, so when they eat their meal well or try new foods, tell them how well they've done.
- If your child hasn't eaten well, don't make a fuss. Take the plate away and don't offer an alternative. All children can be fussy at times and they will eat when they are hungry.
- If you have pudding, choose a healthy option like low sugar yoghurt and fruit. Do not withhold pudding if your child doesn't eat the main course.
- Children enjoy feeding themselves – offering finger foods makes self-feeding easier for young children.
- Try to make meals colourful, interesting and enjoyable.



Ways we're going to eat better and move more

Making a note of the changes we plan to make can help us to remember them and to plan, here are some examples:

- ✓ Add carrots to spaghetti Bolognese
- ✓ Take vegetable sticks when out and about.
- ✓ Have a family trip to the park on Saturday.
- ✓ Try a new fruit each week.
- ✓ Find a song we all like and try out our dance moves.

There's some space below for you to make a note of some of the changes you're thinking about:

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Choose 2 or 3 of these changes that you think are do-able:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Tips on making changes

- ✓ If you've made the changes give your family **PRAISE!** You can think about choosing another change if you're ready.
- ✓ If you're struggling with the change don't worry, changing some habits can be hard – try to avoid arguing about food with the family. It's better to think about how you could make the change easier next time. Or you could try another change instead.
- ✓ Remember that as the adult you are responsible for what food you buy. If your family pester you for certain foods, try to explain calmly that you are all making changes for a healthier future!

Think about what you will need to help you make these changes and when you're ready give it a go!