

Feeding by Age

6 to 9 Months

Your toddler may:

- continue to breastfeed
- pick up food between her fingers and palms and put it in her mouth
- bite off food
- close her lips around a cup held for her
- chew by moving food from front to back and to the sides of her mouth, by munching up and down, and by grinding



DID YOU KNOW

Human milk is still your child's most important drink.

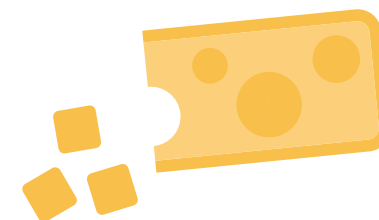


TRY THIS

Instead of jarred baby food, try mashing soft and cooked family foods with a fork. Add water or human milk to moisten, and try mixing different foods together.

Feeding tips:

- ✓ Start introducing soft foods and finger foods at about 6 months.
- ✓ Give her family foods made with little or no added salt or sugar.
- ✓ Offer solid foods before or after breastfeeding, depending on what works best. This may change over time.
- ✓ Start with iron-rich foods, then add more variety.
- ✓ Offer iron-rich foods 2 or more times a day.
- ✓ Offer her sips of clean water from an open cup, but don't let her fill up on water.
- ✓ Introduce common allergens one at a time. These include milk and milk products, eggs, peanuts and tree nuts, soy, seafood (fish, shellfish), wheat and sesame. (See [Understanding Food Allergies](#))
- ✓ Start with small amounts of food and give your toddler more based on her hunger and fullness cues.
- ✓ Give her lots of practice feeding herself.
- ✓ Be aware of choking hazards. (See [Reducing Choking Hazards](#))
- ✗ Don't give your child honey or food made with honey, even if it's cooked or pasteurized. (See [Safe, Healthy Foods and Drinks](#))
- ✗ Avoid fruit juice, or limit it to no more than ½ cup (125 ml) a day.



9 to 12 Months

Your toddler may:

- chew up and down
- use her thumb and fingers to pick up small pieces of food
- hold a cup in 2 hands
- twist and turn her hand when using a spoon
- drop things from her feeding chair
- want to sit at the family table and try to feed herself

Feeding tips:

- ✓ Sit and eat with your toddler.
- ✓ Offer solid foods before or after you breastfeed, whichever works better. This may change over time.
- ✓ Offer iron-rich foods 2 or more times a day.
- ✓ Keep offering new family foods with different textures.
- ✓ Give her small amounts of clean water in an open cup.
- ✓ Be aware of choking hazards. (See [Reducing Choking Hazards](#))
- ✓ Offer family foods that are made without added sugar or salt.
- ✓ Encourage her to feed herself.
- ✗ Don't give your child honey or food made with honey, even if it's cooked or pasteurized. (See [Safe, Healthy Foods and Drinks](#))

12 to 24 Months

Your toddler may:

- feed herself – messily – with her fingers or a spoon
- eat very little or a lot, depending on the day
- put food in her mouth and take it out again
- throw food
- be easily distracted from eating

What are family foods?

Foods that your whole family normally eats at mealtime. Giving your toddler foods from the family table rather than store-bought baby food provides her with a wider range of textures, tastes and nutrients.



DID YOU KNOW

Fruit juice is a sugary drink, and children don't need it. If you offer it, limit it to no more than 125 ml (½ cup) a day, and serve it at meal or snack time in an open cup.



BRAIN BUILDER

Include your toddler at the family table and eat together as often as possible. Sharing meals will help her learn language and social skills and get used to family foods. Use the time to talk to her about what she sees, tastes and feels.

Feeding tips:

- ✓ Include your toddler in regular family meals.
- ✓ Offer a variety of food textures, including finger foods.
- ✓ Give her family foods made with little or no added salt or sugar.
- ✓ Offer iron-rich foods 2 or more times a day.
- ✓ Include a new food with foods your child already eats, and offer it several times.
- ✓ Give her the same foods prepared in different ways.
- ✓ Include healthy higher-fat foods like salmon, avocado, cheese and nut butters.
- ✓ Be aware of choking hazards. (See [Reducing Choking Hazards](#))
- ✓ Give her water to drink between meals and snacks.
- ✓ Give your child enough time to eat.
- ✗ Limit foods high in salt and sugar like chips, candy and cookies.
- ✗ Limit sugary drinks like fruit juice, pop, sports drinks, energy drinks and fruit-flavoured beverages.
- ✗ Avoid all foods and drinks with caffeine or artificial sweeteners.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Help your toddler get enough iron by offering iron-rich foods 2 or more times a day at meals or snacks. Include meat, poultry, fish, iron-fortified infant cereals, cooked eggs and tofu, and mashed, cooked beans and other legumes.

24 to 36 Months

Your toddler may:

- hold a cup (but spill a lot)
- feed herself cut-up family foods
- eat very little or a lot, depending on the day
- take a long time to eat
- show strong food likes and dislikes

Feeding tips:

- ✓ Include your toddler in regular family meals, and eat together as often as possible.
- ✓ Offer a variety of foods from [Canada's food guide](#).
- ✓ Serve 3 small meals and 2 or 3 snacks at about the same times each day.
- ✓ Consider switching from whole (3.25%) milk to lower-fat milk (1% or 2%).
- ✓ Continue to breastfeed for as long as you and your child want.
- ✓ Be aware of choking hazards. (See [Reducing Choking Hazards](#))
- ✓ Offer water to drink between meals and snacks.
- ✗ Limit foods high in salt and sugar like chips, candy and cookies.
- ✗ Limit sugary drinks like fruit juice, pop, sports drinks, energy drinks and fruit-flavoured beverages.
- ✗ Avoid all foods and drinks with caffeine or artificial sweeteners.

Sample 1-day menu for a 24- to 36-month-old

Breakfast:

- oatmeal with blueberries or banana
- lower-fat milk (1% or 2%) or unsweetened fortified soy beverage

Snack 1:

- banana bread thinly spread with peanut or nut butter
- water

Lunch:

- salmon or egg salad sandwich on whole-wheat bread
- thinly sliced red pepper strips and cucumber slices
- lower-fat milk (1% or 2%) or unsweetened fortified soy beverage
- canned peaches

Snack 2:

- small cubes of cheese
- thinly cut apple slices
- water

Dinner:

- whole-wheat spaghetti with tomato and meat or lentil sauce
- bite-sized pieces of cooked carrot and broccoli florets
- lower-fat milk (1% or 2%) or unsweetened fortified soy beverage



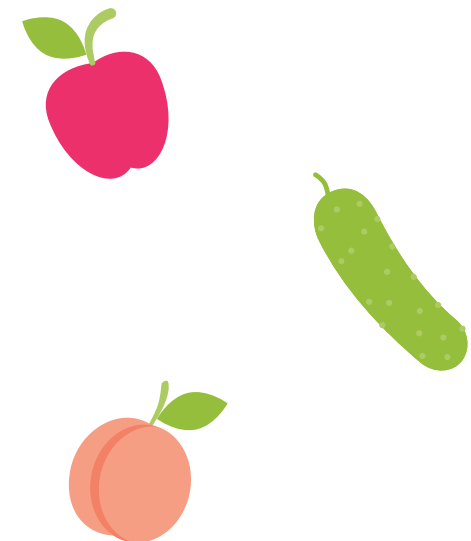
FAMILY STORY

I was amazed at how much better my son ate when we sat together and had the same foods. I made meals we could both eat and cut his up into small pieces he could pick up. It was so cute watching him study – and copy – how I ate.



TRY THIS

Start each feeding with a small amount of food. Give your toddler more based on her hunger and fullness cues (see [Eating Well](#)). It's normal for her appetite to change from day to day. Trust that she'll eat the amount she needs.



Daily Food Suggestions

Offer your toddler a variety of healthy family foods plus human milk every day. This table is based on the groupings in Canada's food guide.

| | Meals and Snacks per day | Vegetables and Fruit | Whole Grain Foods | Protein Foods |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|
| 6 to 9 months | <p>2-3 solid food feedings and 1-2 snacks.</p> <p>Continue to breastfeed.</p> <p>If your child isn't breastfeeding, give store-bought infant formula – cow's milk-based or soy-based (if vegan or for cultural or religious reasons).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> soft-cooked vegetables grated raw vegetables soft fruits like banana and kiwi canned fruit peeled, pitted and cooked hard fruits like apple and pear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iron-fortified infant cereal cooked rice and pasta oat ring cereal crackers, roti, pita | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> well-cooked, finely minced or shredded pieces of meat, poultry, fish or shellfish mashed or diced cooked egg, tofu or legumes peanut butter or nut butter spread thinly on toast or crackers yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese |
| 9 to 12 months | <p>3 solid food feedings and 1-2 snacks.</p> <p>Continue to breastfeed.</p> <p>If your child isn't breastfeeding, you can start to offer small amounts of whole (3.25%) cow's milk (see Safe, Healthy Foods and Drinks).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> soft-cooked vegetables grated raw vegetables soft fruits like banana and kiwi canned fruit peeled, pitted and cooked hard fruits like apple and pear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iron-fortified infant cereal whole grain toast, pasta, rice, crackers small pieces of bannock, tortillas, roti and other breads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> small, well-cooked pieces of meat, poultry, fish or shellfish mashed or diced cooked egg, tofu, legumes peanut butter or nut butter spread thinly on toast or crackers yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, whole (3.25%) cow's milk |
| 12 to 24 months | <p>3 meals and 2-3 snacks.</p> <p>Continue to breastfeed.</p> <p>If your toddler isn't breastfeeding, offer 2 cups (500 ml) whole (3.25%) cow's milk or soy follow-up formula with meals (see Safe, Healthy Foods and Drinks).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> small pieces of soft fruits and vegetables cooked or grated vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> whole grain hot and cold cereal brown rice, whole grain pasta, congee whole grain crackers and toast whole grain bannock, tortillas, roti and other breads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> well-cooked ground, chopped or cubed lean meat, poultry, fish or shellfish mashed legumes whole cooked egg cooked tofu peanut butter or nut butter spread thinly on toast or crackers yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, whole (3.25%) cow's milk or soy follow-up formula |
| 24 to 36 months | <p>3 meals and 2-3 snacks.</p> <p>Continue to breastfeed if you wish.</p> <p>If your child isn't breastfeeding, offer 2 cups (500 ml) lower-fat cow's milk (1% or 2%) or unsweetened fortified soy beverage each day with meals (see Safe, Healthy Foods and Drinks).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> small pieces of soft fruits and vegetables cooked or grated vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> whole grain hot and cold cereal brown rice, whole grain pasta, congee whole grain crackers and toast whole grain bannock, tortillas, roti and other breads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> well-cooked ground, chopped or cubed lean meat, poultry, fish or shellfish mashed legumes whole cooked egg cooked tofu peanut butter or nut butter spread thinly on toast or crackers yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, lower-fat cow's milk (1% or 2%) or unsweetened fortified soy beverage |